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'No option left': SC orders judicial officers for Bengal SIR

Top court intervenes amid Election Commission–state trust deficit row

NEW DELHI

The court directed serving and retired judicial officers to supervise West Bengal's electoral roll revision, citing a trust deficit between the state and the Election Commission of India. District judges will adjudicate claims and objections to ensure fairness and transparency in the process.

The Supreme Court of India on Friday directed the deployment of serving and retired judicial officers to oversee West Bengal's special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, citing a breakdown of trust between the state government and the Election Commission of India (ECI).

A bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant, along with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi, said it had been left with "no option" but to pass the extraordinary order in "extraordinary circumstances".

The court noted an "unfortunate blame game" and "trust deficit" between the West Bengal government and the ECI, which had stalled the process at the stage of examining claims and objections from individuals placed in the logical discrepancy list.

Permitting the ECI to publish the draft voters' list on February 28, the bench said supplementary lists could also be issued later. It directed that judicial officers of the rank of District Judge or Additional District Judge be appointed to adjudicate claims and objections arising from the SIR exercise.

The court requested the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court to make available serving and retired judicial officers to assist in the process, after taking note of the alleged shortage of Grade 'A' officers provided by the state.

Logical discrepancies flagged during the revision include mismatches in parent names and implausible age differences — less than 15 years or more than 50 years — between voters and their listed parents, particularly in progeny links traced to the 2002 voter list.

The bench directed district collectors and superintendents of police to extend logistical and security support to the deputed judicial officers. It clarified that orders passed by them would be deemed orders of the court.

The apex court said the intervention was necessary to ensure fairness in verifying documents and determining inclusion or exclusion of names from the electoral roll.

QUICK READ

Congress stages shirtless protest at AI Summit

NEW DELHI

Around ten workers of the Indian Youth Congress were detained after staging a brief shirtless protest during the AI Impact Summit at Bharat Mandapam. The protesters entered Exhibition Hall No. 5 carrying white T-shirts printed with images of PM Modi and US President Trump, along with slogans referencing the India-US trade deal. The Bharatiya Janata Party termed the protest "shameful", alleging it was aimed at embarrassing India during an international event.

7 killed in car-truck crash on Guj's hilly stretch

Valsad

Seven persons were killed after their car rammed into a parked truck at Kumbhghat in Gujarat's Valsad district on Friday afternoon, police said.

The accident occurred around 1 pm on a hilly road stretch, Karpada police station inspector S.L. Vasava said. According to officials, the car was first hit from behind by a truck while descending the ghat section. The impact caused the car to lose control and crash into a truck parked ahead. Five occupants died on the spot, while two others succumbed to injuries at a nearby community health centre.

US Supreme Court strikes down Donald Trump's global tariffs

WASHINGTON

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday invalidated former President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), citing overreach of executive authority. In a 6-3 ruling authored by Chief Justice John Roberts, the court held that IEEPA does not grant the president unilateral power to levy tariffs, a responsibility reserved for Congress under the Constitution.

Roberts emphasized the "major questions" doctrine, stating that matters of vast economic significance require explicit congressional authorization. The court noted that Trump's emergency-based tariffs affected global trade, financial markets, and strained relations with U.S. allies.

Trump's administration had used IEEPA to impose tariffs on countries including China, Canada, and Mexico, arguing threats to U.S. national security and trade imbalances justified the action. Estimates suggest these tariffs generated over $175 billion in revenue, with projections over the next decade reaching trillions. The Supreme Court's decision may require refunds and could unsettle ongoing trade agreements.

The dissenting justices—Kavanaugh, Thomas, and Alito—argued the president's actions were lawful, citing historical precedent for using tariffs as regulatory tools.

Democrats and industry groups praised the ruling. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer called it a "victory for American consumers," while Elizabeth Warren warned that recouping paid tariffs remains legally unclear, benefiting large corporations instead of citizens.

The ruling significantly curtails the executive branch's unilateral economic powers, limiting the use of emergency declarations for tariff impositions and reinforcing Congress's authority over trade and taxation.

India joins US-led strategic alliance Pax Silica

NEW DELHI

India on Friday joined the US-led strategic alliance Pax Silica, aimed at building resilient supply chains for critical minerals and artificial intelligence (AI). The pact was signed at the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi.

Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw, US Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Jacob Helberg, and US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor attended the ceremony. India's decision comes amid efforts by New Delhi and Washington to finalise a proposed trade deal and strengthen bilateral ties following a period of strain. Gor described India's entry as a strategic move that would bolster overall relations, highlighting the country's engineering talent and growing critical mineral processing capacity. He also indicated that the US could share trusted AI technologies with India under the framework.

Helberg characterised Pax Silica as an initiative against economic coercion and over-concentrated supply chains, in an apparent reference to China. "We say no to weaponised dependency and blackmail," he said, stressing that economic security is national security.

> **From the India-US trade deal to Pax Silica to defence cooperation, the potential for our two nations to work together is truly limitless, Gor said.**

Tension in Bagalkot after stone pelting near mosque; 8 held

BAGALKOT

Tension prevailed in Bagalkot after a stone-pelting incident near a mosque in the Kila Oni area of Navanagar, prompting police to impose prohibitory orders and arrest eight people.

According to Superintendent of Police Siddharth Goyal, a procession that began in the old town around 3.30 pm on Thursday was nearing completion when the incident occurred at about 9.30 pm. Two stones placed under a shoe rack at the mosque were disturbed, and one hit a police officer. No serious injuries were reported.

Police identified Tanzeer as the prime accused, stating video footage shows him pelting two stones. "Only one person pelted stones. No sticks or weapons were used," Goyal clarified. Seven others were arrested for allegedly obstructing police personnel on duty. An FIR was registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including unlawful assembly, rioting, attempt to murder, and deterring a public servant from duty.

Prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita are in force from midnight of February 19 to midnight of February 24, banning gatherings of more than four people and restricting weapons, public meetings, and sit-ins without permission. Tension escalated Friday morning when a group staged a protest and allegedly resorted to stone-pelting. Police conducted a mild lathi-charge to disperse the crowd. Inspector General of Police Northern Range Chetan Singh Rathore reviewed the situation.

BJP Rajya Sabha MP Narayanasa Bandage criticised the Congress government and announced plans for another procession.

CM Siddaramaiah urges peace; BJP blames Congress

Bengaluru: Siddaramaiah on Friday appealed for peace after communal clashes in Bagalkot during a Shivaji Jayanti procession allegedly triggered by stone pelting. Tension gripped the district headquarters, prompting authorities to impose prohibitory orders, while shops remained shut amid unrest. In a post on X, Siddaramaiah condemned the incident as a threat to social harmony and said he had directed senior police officers to conduct an impartial probe. He ordered strict legal action against those responsible, adding that some accused have been arrested and are being questioned. Ensuring a fear-free and peaceful environment is the government's top priority, he said, urging citizens to remain calm and not fall prey to provocation. He assured that police would act impartially.

B'desh Resumes Visa Services for Indian Nationals

NEW DELHI

The High Commission of Bangladesh in New Delhi has lifted the partial suspension of visa services for Indian nationals that had been in effect since December, according to a report. The Bangladesh Commission reopened its consular operations on Friday morning, for all visa categories, including tourist and medical visas.

Restrictions were earlier put to business and work visas. The move has come days after the formation of a government in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) swept the recent polls, bringing Taruique Rahman to the office of the Prime Minister. As he assumed office, Rahman underscored Dhaka's intent to mend relations with New Delhi.

Rahul appears in Sultanpur court in defamation case

SULTANPUR

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi appeared before an MP/MLA court here on Friday in connection with a criminal defamation case linked to his alleged remarks against Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the 2018 Karnataka Assembly election campaign.

Gandhi recorded his statement before the judge, complying with earlier directions of the court which had granted him a final opportunity to appear in person. The next hearing in the matter has been scheduled for March 9.

The case was filed by BJP leader Vijay Mishra, who alleged that Gandhi made objectionable and defamatory statements against Shah at an election rally in Bengaluru in 2018. The complainant contended that the remarks harmed the reputation of the senior BJP leader.

During the proceedings, Gandhi's counsel argued that the allegations were false and politically motivated, asserting that the case had been initiated with malafide intent.

After attending court, Gandhi met Ramchet, a cobbler whose father had died of cancer a few months ago. Gandhi had earlier visited his shop and even stitched shoes there during a previous visit. He later provided the cobbler with a stitching machine to support his livelihood.

A large number of Congress workers gathered outside the courtroom during Gandhi's appearance, raising slogans in support of the party leader.

DUTCH PM @TMC

Netherlands PM Dick Schoof visits City Traffic Centre

BENGALURU

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BENGALURU TRAFFIC POLICE

Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Dick Schoof, on Friday visited the Traffic Management Centre (TMC) in Bengaluru as part of his official tour of the city, police said.

Schoof, who arrived on Thursday, was hosted by the Bengaluru Traffic Police at the state-of-the-art facility. The visit was attended by Karnataka Director General and Inspector General of Police M.A. Saleem, Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh, and Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Karthik Reddy, along with other senior officers.

During the interaction, senior officials presented a detailed overview of innovative initiatives and global best practices adopted in traffic regulation and enforcement. The delegation was briefed on advanced, technology-driven systems aimed at enhancing road safety, improving urban mobility and ensuring efficient law enforcement.

Officials showcased real-time traffic monitoring mechanisms, AI-enabled surveillance tools, adaptive traffic signal control systems and integrated command-and-control operations functioning at the centre. Live demonstrations highlighted how data analytics and smart technologies are being used to manage congestion, detect violations and respond swiftly to emergencies.

According to a police statement, the visit underscored Bengaluru's emphasis on adopting smart mobility solutions and strengthening road safety measures in one of India's fastest-growing metropolitan cities. The Netherlands delegation expressed interest in understanding how technology is being leveraged to tackle urban traffic challenges, officials added.

Three-year-old girl raped, strangled to death, neighbour arrested

GURUGRAM

A three-year-old girl was allegedly raped and strangled to death in Sector 37 by her neighbour, who lured the toddler away from her home at a village located nearby, officials said on Friday. Police have arrested the accused, who confessed to the crime they said. On Thursday night, police received a complaint that a minor girl was missing in Mohammadpur Jharsa village, with the family alleging that a man living in the neighbourhood lured her away.

Police arrested the accused, a native of Bihar who worked as a scrap collector in Gurugram, within an hour of filing an FIR at the Sector 37 police station, the officials said. "During interrogation, the accused disclosed that late on Thursday evening, he lured the minor girl to a secluded place in Sector 37, where he first raped her and then strangled her to death to wipe out evidence.

QUICK READ

Cultural evening at Basavanagudi

BENGALURU
The Param Foundation will host a cultural programme titled "Param Vihara" under the banner of Param Culture on February 22 at 6 pm. The event will take place at Abalashrama on DVG Road in Basavanagudi. Aimed at encouraging young talent, the evening will open with a Sugama Sangeet recital by vocalist S. Skandesh, accompanied by keyboardist Jayawardhana and tabla player Rohit Kulkarni. The programme will then feature an engaging Kathak dance performance. Organised in collaboration with Prakriti, the two-hour event is open to all, with free admission for art lovers.

SCL technology workshop from February 23

BENGALURU
A five-day workshop on "ASIT Design Flow Using SCL Technology" will be held at the Cambridge Institute of Technology from February 23 to strengthen the semiconductor design ecosystem. Organised under the Chips to Startup initiative, the programme will bring together industry experts, instructors and students for hands-on training in chip design processes. The workshop aims to contribute to the larger national goal of training 85,000 engineers in semiconductor and chip design, according to a release.

Government lifts price cap on library books

Under the new policy, reader-demand procurement has been increased from 10% to 40%

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The State government has overhauled Karnataka's public library book procurement system, lifting long-standing price caps and significantly expanding reader-driven purchases to allow libraries to stock bestsellers, competitive exam guides and other high-demand titles.

In a recent order, the Department of Public Libraries removed strict limits on book prices, dimensions and remuneration per page that had governed acquisitions for nearly two decades. Earlier, only 10% of books in city and district libraries could be purchased based on reader demand, and even those had to adhere to rigid pricing and specification norms. Titles that failed to meet these criteria were often excluded from consideration by state and district-level committees.

Under the new policy, reader-demand procurement has been increased from 10% to 40%. Libraries can now acquire the latest editions of bestsellers and competitive exam books regardless of

cost, marking what officials described as a "historic shift" in the system.

The need for reform was evident in the 2022 procurement cycle currently underway. Not a single book was selected in the competitive exam and textbook categories. Of the 3,965 books procured, 3,005 were literature titles, while funds earmarked for other segments remained unused and were eventually diverted to literature purchases.

With the revised guidelines, works by prominent authors such as Banu Mushtaq and S. L. Bhyrappa, which previously fell outside price limits, can now find space on library shelves. Officials said this would help balance collections and better reflect reader interests.

H. Basavarajendra, Commissioner of the Department of Public Libraries, said readers can submit requests directly to chief librarians, and district-level committees — soon to be reconstituted with academics and representatives from book-reading clubs — will vet and approve lists. Requested books are expected to reach shelves within a month.

"This is bound to infuse more life into government libraries and strengthen reading habits," Basavarajendra said, adding that the impact would be visible over the next five years.

Jayanna, Bengaluru District Secretary of the All India Democratic Youth Organisation, welcomed the move, noting that access to expensive, high-demand books would benefit students who might otherwise lack exposure to them. He also called for expanding libraries to the hobli level to further encourage reading.

Water Board Chairman elected as India's sole representative to global body SWAN

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Dr Ram Prasat Manohar, Chairman of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), has been elected as India's sole representative to the 5th Senior Utility Advisory Committee of the Smart Water Networks Forum (SWAN), a leading global organisation in the smart water sector.

Dr Manohar is the only Indian water utility chief to be selected to the prestigious global panel, which includes experts from Australia, Canada, Portugal, Brazil and the United States. The committee members, chosen for their extensive contributions to the water industry, will work together to identify global water challenges, analyse regional trends and set strategic research priorities. They will also review SWAN's future plans and international initiatives.

Dr Manohar recognised for AI-driven reforms at city's water utility.

The recognition comes in the wake of BWSSB's adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data-driven technologies to improve water supply and wastewater management in Bengaluru. Under Dr Manohar's leadership, the utility has implemented smart monitoring systems, data analytics platforms and technology-enabled infrastructure upgrades aimed at improving operational efficiency and service delivery.

Officials said these initiatives have helped position Bengaluru as a model for urban water management innovation, enabling India's water challenges and technological responses to be represented on a global platform.

Reacting to his selection, Dr Manohar said the vision of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar had enabled BWSSB to earn global recognition. In line with the Deputy Chief Minister's concept of "Brand Bengaluru," the Board has embraced world-class, AI-powered technologies to modernise the city's water infrastructure, he said.

"I dedicate this milestone to the tireless efforts of BWSSB's technical team and staff who implement these technological projects every day to serve the citizens of Bengaluru," he added. Expressing admiration for SWAN's global vision, Dr Manohar said he looked forward to collaborating with international experts to develop practical and scalable solutions to complex water management challenges.

Other members of the 5th Utility Advisory Committee include representatives from leading utilities such as Louisville MSD (USA), Busselton Water (Australia), Águas e Energia do Porto (Portugal), Toronto Water (Canada) and Sabesp (Brazil).

About SWAN
Founded in 2010, SWAN is a non-profit global organisation that promotes the adoption of data-driven "smart" solutions in the management of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater networks worldwide.

Woman falls for Valentine's Day gift from 'Belgium doctor', loses ₹1.3 lakh

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A Valentine's Day promise turned into an expensive lesson for a 34-year-old divorcee from Veeranapalya in north Bengaluru, who lost over ₹1.3 lakh in a gift parcel scam allegedly orchestrated by cyber fraudsters posing as a foreign doctor and customs officials.

According to police, the woman had registered on a matrimonial portal for divorcees when she was contacted by a man identifying himself as Shiva Vishnu Surendra. Claiming to be a doctor settled in Belgium, he soon struck up frequent conversations with her on WhatsApp. Over time, he built trust through affectionate messages and spoke about marriage, creating an emotional bond.

As Valentine's Day approached, Surendra told her he had sent expensive gifts and euros to India as a token of his love. Two days later, she received a call from another number. The caller introduced himself as a customs official and informed her that a parcel addressed to her — allegedly containing costly gifts and foreign currency — had arrived but was being withheld due to pending clearance charges.

What followed was a classic escalation tactic. The fraudsters demanded payments under various pretexts, including customs duty, tax clearance and courier handling fees. Reassured repeatedly by Surendra that the parcel was genuine, the woman transferred over ₹1.3 lakh through multiple online transactions.

Her suspicion was aroused only when the callers continued to demand more money even after the initial payments. When she confronted Surendra, he allegedly urged her to pay the additional amount, further reinforcing the deception. Realising she had been duped, she approached the police and filed a complaint.

A senior police officer said such scams are commonly reported in the run-up to Valentine's Day and in the days following it. Similar cases have surfaced in cities including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Kochi, where victims were targeted through matrimonial or dating platforms by fraudsters posing as NRI professionals. Police have urged citizens to verify identities and avoid transferring money to unknown individuals.

Woman held for stealing gold to clear boyfriend's debt

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 35-year-old woman has been arrested for allegedly stealing 35 grams of gold jewellery worth ₹3.4 lakh from the apartment where she worked, to help her boyfriend repay a loan. The incident was reported from Babusapalya under the jurisdiction of Hennur police station.

The accused, identified as Pramila, is married and has two children. Her alleged lover, Sudhakar, who is also married with two children, is currently absconding. Police said the two met while working at a garment factory in Bommanahalli and developed a relationship. Pramila later quit her job and began working as a housekeeper in a private apartment.

According to investigators, during the Sankranti festival, Sudhakar allegedly sought ₹20,000 from Pramila to clear a debt. In response, she is said to have stolen gold ornaments from the residence of her employer. She subsequently sold the jewellery at gold shops in Bommanahalli and handed over the money to him.

The theft came to light about a month later when the homeowner noticed the missing jewellery and filed a complaint with Hennur police. During initial questioning, Pramila denied any involvement. However, sustained interrogation led to her confession, police said.

Based on her statement, officers traced the transactions to local gold shops and recovered 35 grams of gold ornaments valued at ₹3.4 lakh.

A case has been registered, and efforts are under way to trace and apprehend Sudhakar. Police said further investigation is in progress to ascertain if anyone else was involved in the offence.

Action plan to curb fake Nandini ghee menace

BENGALURU

The Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) has drawn up a comprehensive plan to tackle the circulation of counterfeit products sold under its flagship Nandini label, following the recent detection of fake ghee in the market.

Nandini, Karnataka's iconic dairy brand, enjoys wide consumer trust both within the State and outside due to its quality standards. However, reports of spurious products being sold in its name have raised concern among officials and consumers alike. KMF authorities, in coordination with the police, recently identified instances of fake Nandini products being distributed, prompting immediate action.

To safeguard the brand's reputation and ensure consumer confidence, KMF has introduced a QR code-based authentication system. The initiative has been rolled out initially on Nandini ghee packets and bottles.

Under the new system, customers can scan the QR code printed on the packaging to verify the authenticity of the product. After scanning, consumers must enter a unique number and complete a one-time password (OTP) verification process. Once authenticated, detailed information about the product is displayed on their mobile phone. This includes where the ghee was manufactured, the date it was dispatched from the production unit, its market code and other traceability details.

Nandini
Pure Ghee
ನಂದಿನಿ
ಶುದ್ಧ
ತುಪ್ಪ

Officials believe this digital tracking mechanism will act as a strong deterrent against counterfeiters and help consumers easily identify genuine products.

At present, the QR code feature has been introduced only for ghee. KMF plans to gradually extend the system to other Nandini products in phases.

KMF Managing Director Shivaswamy said the move would significantly help prevent the sale of fake ghee and curb attempts to duplicate the brand. He added that strengthening product traceability and empowering consumers with verification tools are key steps in protecting Nandini's long-standing reputation for quality.

Consider adoption plea of couple raising abandoned child: High Court

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has directed authorities to consider the adoption application of a Shivamogga couple who have been raising an abandoned child for nearly a decade, after conducting the inquiry mandated under law.

Justice D. K. Singh passed the order while disposing of a petition filed by the couple, who had challenged proceedings initiated against them by the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Shivamogga, in 2017.

According to the petitioners, a baby boy was abandoned at the Gavi Siddheshwara Swami Mutt three days after his birth. On June 10, 2016, the seer of the mutt handed over the infant to the couple, who have since raised him as their own. The child, now studying in Class IV, has been in their continuous care for nearly 10 years.

The couple informed the court that they had earlier lost their own child — born with disabilities — who died at the age of four months about 12 years ago. They argued that denying them the opportunity to legally adopt the boy would be inhuman, considering the emotional bond and stable upbringing they have provided.

Observing that the paramount consideration must be the child's welfare, care and protection, Justice Singh noted that the interests of the child appeared to be secure in the custody of the petitioners, who had looked after him as their own for years.

The judge remarked that the couple may not have approached the committee earlier due to procedural or legal oversight under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016.

Fake raid lands janitor duo in soup

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a brazen inside job, two housekeeping staff allegedly impersonated GST officials, staged a fake raid and extorted ₹5 lakh from a tobacco trader, only to be caught after vigilance officials noticed a sudden and conspicuous change in their lifestyle.

The accused, P. Nagaraj (37) and Dadafir Ballari (35), were outsourced housekeeping workers at the office of the Principal Commissioner of Central Tax and GST Commissionerate (Bengaluru West), located in the BMTC bus stand building in Banashankari. Investigators said the duo were well-versed with officers' dress codes, official routines and raid procedures, knowledge they allegedly used to convincingly stage the impersonation.

Suspicion was triggered by their recent spending patterns, prompting vigilance officials to conduct a surprise inspection on Tuesday. A search of their room within the office premises led to the recovery of cash bundles — ₹1 lakh from Dadafir and ₹1.5 lakh from Nagaraj — along with forged identity cards and fabricated search warrants. Among the seized items were three fake identity cards bearing Nagaraj's photograph but showing different designations, including a CLTS staff member, an intelligence officer named Gaurav Kumar and even a sepoy, all falsely projected as issued by the Ministry of Finance's GST office.

HONOUR FOR ARTISTES

Honnaru Rangotsava to honour Kannada theatre legends

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A grand theatre spectacle celebrating five decades of modern Kannada theatre will unfold at Ravindra Kalakshetra from February 21 to 26 as part of Honnaru Rangotsava. The festival will bring together six iconic troupes — Ranga Sampada, Samudaya, Nataranga, Kalagangothri, Spandana and Benaka — each with a legacy spanning nearly 50 years.

"Honnaru," meaning 'The Golden Six' in Kannada, pays tribute to a transformative era that shaped the State's cultural landscape. The event is being coordinated by theatre personalities Srinivas G Kappanna and V.M. Nagesh, with strong support from actor and former Minister Umashree.

According to Kappanna, the roots of Kannada theatre stretch back to tribal and folk traditions before evolving into professional productions centred on mythological and social themes. A defining turning point came in September 1969, when 13 amateur groups from Bengaluru, led by R. Nagesh and directed by Prof. B. Chandrashekhar, united to stage Girish Karnad's landmark play Tughlaq.

That production proved to be a watershed moment. The unprecedented collaboration among amateur groups captured the imagination of audiences and established Karnad as a major playwright. It also propelled actors such as C.R. Simha and Lokesh into the limelight. For Kappanna, the production sparked a personal journey into lighting design — then a relatively unexplored field in Kannada theatre.

The early 1970s marked a golden phase. Visionary director B. V. Karanth introduced bold new aesthetics, while the 1972 National Theatre Festival encouraged experimentation and collaboration. A new generation of talents — including Prasanna, C.G. Krishnaswamy, B. Jayashree, S. Malathi and Shankar Nag — energised the stage. Writers such as Chandrashekhar Kambar, P. Lankesh and H.S. Shivaprakash expanded the intellectual and political scope of theatre, especially during the Emergency, when the stage became a space for debate and dissent.

However, the rise of television in the 1980s dealt a blow to live theatre. Long queues outside Ravindra Kalakshetra dwindled as audiences turned to the small screen. For a time, the movement appeared to falter.

Yet, the resilience and passion of theatre artistes ensured its survival. As television content grew increasingly predictable, audiences gradually rediscovered the immediacy and intensity of live performance. Honnaru Rangotsava seeks not only to honour that enduring spirit but also to reconnect contemporary viewers with a vibrant legacy that continues to inspire Kannada theatre today.

QUICK READ

Power Consumers' Interaction Meeting on February 21

Vijayapura

A power consumers' interaction meeting has been organised by Hubballi Electricity Supply Company Limited (HESCOM) on February 21 at 3:30 pm. According to an official release, the meeting will be held at the Office of the Operation and Maintenance (Rural) Sub-Division in Vijayapur taluk. The programme is intended for electricity consumers coming under the jurisdiction of the rural sub-division. Consumers from villages within the sub-division limits are invited to participate in the meeting and raise issues related to power supply, billing, maintenance and other electricity-related concerns.

'Sarvajna a Great Philosopher Who Reformed Society'

Vijayapura

Renowned saint poet Sarvajna reformed society through his sharp and meaningful tripadis, said Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr. Audram. He was speaking after inaugurating the Sant Kavi Sarvajna Jayanti programme organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat and the Department of Kannada and Culture at Kandagal Sri Hanumantharaya Rangamandir in the city on Friday. Dr. Audram said Sarvajna conveyed moral values, social justice and philosophical ideals in simple, three-line verses that were easily understood by common people. His tripadis highlighted issues related to agriculture, family life and social inequalities.

Protest Seeks Implementation of Criminal Justice Demands

Kalaburagi

Leaders of the drug community in the city staged a protest in front of a minister's office on Friday, demanding effective implementation of criminal justice measures and action on their longstanding grievances. The demonstration was led by community leader Shyam Natikar, who, along with several members of the community, gathered near the minister's office raising slogans and holding placards. Protesters alleged that despite repeated representations to authorities, their concerns related to criminal justice and law enforcement have not been adequately addressed. Speaking on the occasion, Shyam Natikar said that members of the community have been facing persistent issues.

Mother, Newborn Die; Negligence Alleged on Part of Hospital

Family demands probe after deaths at Sindagi Taluk Government Hospital

SINDAGI

A tragic incident was reported from Sindagi town where a young mother and her newborn baby died following childbirth at the Taluk Government Hospital, leading to allegations of medical negligence by family members.

The deceased woman has been identified as Maithra Ravichandra Sungathana, a resident of Vidyanagar 4th Cross in Sindagi. According to her family, Maithra was admitted to the Sindagi Taluk Government Hospital after she began experiencing labour pains.

Hospital sources stated that she delivered a baby at approximately 5 pm. However, shortly after childbirth, Maithra reportedly developed severe postpartum complications, including heavy bleeding. As her condition worsened, doctors at the hospital decided to refer her to a higher medical centre in Vijayapura for advanced treatment.

Family members have alleged that there was a delay and negligence in providing timely and appropriate medical care at the Taluk Hospital. They claimed that adequate attention was not given when her health began to deteriorate after delivery. According to relatives, critical time was lost before the decision to shift her to Vijayapura was implemented.

As arrangements were being made to transfer her to the higher medical facility, Maithra's condition reportedly declined further. She died on the way to Vijayapura. The newborn baby also did not survive, compounding the grief of the family.

The incident has triggered shock and anger among relatives and residents of the locality, who gathered at the hospital premises demanding accountability. Family members have called for a thorough and impartial inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the deaths and have sought strict action against those found responsible if negligence is established.

Police have registered a case at the Sindagi Police Station based on a complaint filed by the family and have initiated an investigation into the matter. Health department officials are also expected to conduct a preliminary inquiry to ascertain whether there were any lapses in medical care. Further details are awaited as investigations continue.

CEO Rishi Anand directs officials to ensure smooth conduct

CEO Rishi Anand orders foolproof arrangements for II PUC Exam–1

VIJAYAPURA

District Chief Executive Officer Rishi Anand has directed officials to make comprehensive arrangements for the smooth and error-free conduct of the Second PUC Examination–1, scheduled to be held from February 28 to March 17 across the district.

Chairing a preparatory meeting at the Government PU College near Gandhi Circle, he said examinations will be conducted at 64 centres spread across 13 taluks, with a total of 32,178 students set to appear. Stressing the importance of strict adherence to examination guidelines, he instructed officials to take all necessary precautions to prevent any lapses or irregularities.

To streamline the process, a special committee has been constituted comprising the Additional Deputy Commissioner, the Deputy Director of the District Treasury and the Deputy Director of the Pre-University Education Department. The committee will oversee the distribution of examination materials to 27 designated route teams.

Each route team will consist of assigned officials responsible for the secure transportation of question papers and related materials. Armed police personnel will accompany the teams to ensure security. Authorities have also made arrangements for adequate police deployment at all examination centres. After the completion of each exam, answer scripts will be escorted by police personnel to designated post offices for safe dispatch.

As part of preventive measures, a 200-metre radius around every examination centre will be declared a prohibited zone on exam days to prevent unauthorised gatherings and malpractice. Surveillance will be strengthened with the installation of CCTV cameras at all centres. Additionally, webcasting facilities will be established at the offices of the Deputy Commissioner and the Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer to enable real-time monitoring of examination proceedings.

Additional Superintendent of Police Ramanagouda Hatti assured full cooperation from the police department to maintain law and order and facilitate the smooth conduct of the examinations. Officials reiterated their commitment to conducting the examinations in a transparent and disciplined manner, ensuring a fair environment for all students appearing for the crucial pre-university tests.

Hobli Pension Adalats In 15 Villages

VIJAYAPURA

Hobli-level Pension Adalats will be conducted in 15 villages across the district on February 21 at 11 am to ensure the effective implementation of various social security schemes, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Anand K has announced. According to an official release, the Adalats will be organised by the respective Sub-Divisional Officers and Tahsildars at designated venues in different taluks. The initiative aims to provide a direct platform for pension beneficiaries to raise grievances and seek resolution regarding pension-related issues. In Basavana Bagewadi taluk, the Pension Adalat will be held at Sri Rachoteshwar Temple in Mannur village. In Chadachan taluk, it will take place at Sri Kavadeshwar Math Temple in Jigajeevanagi village. Similar programmes will be organised at temples, community halls, gram panchayat offices and government schools across other taluks including Indi, Tikota, Babaleshwar, Nidagundi, Kolhar, Muddebihal, Talikote, Sindagi, Devar Hipparagi and Almel. Officials stated that beneficiaries receiving pensions under various social security schemes through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system are expected to attend the Adalats.

Eight Arrested After Stone Pelting

BAGALKOT

Tension gripped Killa Street during Shivaji Jayanti procession on Thursday evening.

Tension prevailed for several hours in the Killa Street (Killa Oni) area of Bagalkot city following a stone-pelting incident during the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti procession on Thursday. According to sources, the incident occurred when a procession carrying a portrait of Shivaji Maharaj was passing through the locality.

Miscreants allegedly hurled stones and slippers from inside a mosque, triggering panic and chaos at the spot. Police personnel deployed to maintain law and order were also reportedly targeted during the incident. Superintendent of Police (SP) Siddharth Goyal, who was present at the scene overseeing security arrangements, was said to have been hit by a stone. Though blood stains were reportedly seen on his clothes, police later clarified that he did not sustain any serious injuries. Two other police personnel were also hit by stones, but officials confirmed that none suffered injuries.

As tensions escalated, police resorted to a mild lathi-charge to disperse the crowd and prevent further deterioration of the situation. A brief argument reportedly broke out following the stone pelting, and a large number of people gathered at the location. Senior police officials rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. Additional forces were deployed in Killa Street and other sensitive areas as a precautionary measure.

Leaders and activists of various Hindu organisations staged a protest at the site, condemning the incident and demanding the immediate arrest of those responsible. Maratha Samaj District President Maruthirao Shinde strongly denounced the act and urged authorities to take strict action against the culprits. He warned that if swift action was not taken, traders in Bagalkot would be asked to shut their shops on Friday morning and a bandh could be called in protest.

Responding to the incident, SP Siddharth Goyal confirmed that stone pelting did occur during the procession and stated that police were reviewing CCTV footage and viral videos circulating on social media. He assured that those involved would be identified and arrested in accordance with the law and appealed to the public to maintain peace and refrain from spreading rumours.

Later in the night, at around 12:30 am, unidentified miscreants reportedly set fire to a vegetable cart in a market near Killa Street. Police personnel promptly extinguished the fire. The incident falls under the jurisdiction of the Bagalkot City Police Station.

In connection with the case, police have arrested eight accused following investigation based on CCTV footage, video clips and other evidence. The arrested individuals have been identified as Tanveer Havaldar (25) of Navanagar 10th Sector; Saddam (22) of Pendaragalli; Mujju Kamatagi; Fayyaz Hanumasagar (24) of Pendaragalli; Sarparaja Chavus (33) near Shankarliga Gudi; Ryan Sheikh (21); Ayan Guledagudda (19); and Waseem Sheikh (22), all residents of Pendaragalli.

SP Goyal said further investigation is underway and additional arrests may follow if more persons are found involved. Police have reiterated their appeal for communal harmony and warned of strict action against anyone attempting to disturb law and order.

Dy Commissioner Reviews Civic Facilities

VIJAYAPURA

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Anand K conducted an inspection of various parts of Vijayapur city, reviewing civic facilities and issuing directions to officials to improve public amenities and infrastructure.

During his visit to LBS Market, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need to enhance basic facilities and maintain cleanliness in and around the market premises. He observed that vendors selling fruits and vegetables along roads near LBS Market, Nehru Market and Gandhi Circle were causing inconvenience to pedestrians and motorists. He directed officials to ensure that traders conduct their business only at designated locations to avoid traffic congestion and ensure smooth movement of the public.

Dr. Anand K also instructed officials to expedite the allotment of shops already constructed near Nehru Market to identified vendors. He said proper allocation of these shops would help streamline business activities and prevent roadside vending in congested areas.

The Deputy Commissioner later visited the City Central Library, where he reviewed facilities available to students and readers. He directed authorities to provide adequate drinking water arrangements and maintain cleanliness within the premises to ensure a conducive and comfortable environment for visitors.

Continuing his inspection, Dr. Anand K visited the Food Court zone on Solapur Road and the vacant spaces beneath and around the flyover near Ibrahimpur Road.

2 Police Dogs Retired After 12 Years of Service

VIJAYAPURA

Superintendent of Police Laxman Nimbargi announced the retirement of two police dogs, Raksha and Stella, who served the department for more than 12 years with distinction.

Speaking on the occasion, the SP said Stella played a crucial role in over 600 criminal cases and assisted the department in tracking and helping to apprehend more than 30 accused persons. Her contribution to crime detection was widely appreciated within the force.

Raksha, a trained sniffer dog, specialised in detecting bombs and smuggled materials. She was also deployed during VVIP security arrangements to ensure safety and prevent potential threats. The SP described the retirement of the two dogs as an emotional moment for the department, acknowledging their loyal and dedicated service.

On the same occasion, two new police dogs — Yodha and Vedha — were formally inducted into service. Yodha, a Belgian Malinois breed, is specially trained in crime detection and will assist in cracking criminal cases. Vedha is trained in detecting bombs and explosive materials and will strengthen the department's anti-sabotage operations.

The SP welcomed the new canine recruits and expressed confidence that they would continue the proud legacy of their predecessors.

Police Destroy Modified Silencer

VIJAYAPURA

In a crackdown against illegal vehicle modifications, police officials destroyed a modified silencer seized from a two-wheeler during a special enforcement drive in Vijayapur. The destruction programme was carried out near Darga Jail Circle on Concrete Road in the presence of Superintendent of Police Laxman Nimbargi.

The action was part of a broader initiative aimed at curbing the use of unlawful and high-decibel silencers that create public nuisance and contribute significantly to noise pollution. Police authorities stated that such modified silencers not only disturb public peace but also violate motor vehicle regulations. According to officials, the special campaign has been launched across the city to identify and take action against vehicles fitted with unauthorised modifications, particularly those producing excessive sound. During routine checks and enforcement drives, vehicles found using altered silencers are being seized and penalised under relevant provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act. Superintendent of Police Laxman Nimbargi said the department is committed to maintaining public order and ensuring compliance with traffic and safety norms.

ASSAULT DURING EXAM

Student Assaults Professor during College Examination

KALABURAGI

An Assistant Professor was allegedly assaulted by a student after he was prevented from copying during an internal examination at Dr. Malakareddy Homeopathic College in Kalaburagi city. The incident took place during the internal examination for the subject Homeopathic Materia Medica, raising concerns about discipline and faculty safety within educational institutions.

According to sources, a student identified as Shahbaz, reportedly from Kerala, was allegedly attempting to copy answers using a mobile phone inside the examination hall. Assistant Professor Shivaraj Kumar, who was serving as the invigilator at the time, noticed the suspicious activity and confronted the student.

Sources said the professor confiscated the student's answer sheet and instructed him to leave the classroom for violating examination rules. The action reportedly enraged the student.

In a shocking turn of events, Shahbaz allegedly assaulted Assistant Professor Shivaraj Kumar inside the examination hall. CCTV footage of the incident, which has reportedly surfaced, shows the student physically attacking the faculty member. Other students present in the hall intervened promptly and managed to prevent the situation from escalating further.

Following the alleged assault, Shahbaz reportedly fled from the examination hall. The college administration has informed the student's parents about the incident and his alleged misconduct. Sources within the institution stated that the management has decided not to permit him to appear for further examinations.

Despite the alleged assault and verbal abuse, no formal police complaint has been filed so far by Assistant Professor Shivaraj Kumar. The college management is said to be reviewing the matter internally and considering appropriate disciplinary action.

QUICK READ

Tiger carcass found, one arrested in Kollegal

CHAMARAJANAGAR

Forest officials have arrested a man in connection with the death of a male tiger whose carcass was found in the Gundal reservoir in Kollegal taluk. The reservoir falls under the Biligiriranganath Tiger Reserve. The tiger's body was discovered on February 15, prompting an immediate investigation by the forest department. Following inquiries, officials arrested Kumar, son of Somanna, from Kongarahalli (Kamagare) village, allegedly involved in hunting wild animals. After questioning, he was produced before the court and remanded in judicial custody. Further investigation is underway to determine the exact cause of the tiger's death.

Stray dog attacks child near anganwadi in Vittal

Vittal

A young girl was seriously injured after being attacked by a stray dog while walking to an Anganwadi in Bolanthur, Bantwal taluk. The child, Rijila Saramma, daughter of Riyaz from Narsha Bangarkodi, was walking alone on Thursday morning when the dog suddenly attacked her. She sustained serious injuries to her face and body and has been admitted to a hospital in Mangaluru for treatment. Local authorities have been informed, and the incident has raised concerns about stray animal safety in the area.

Three youths arrested in Puttur drug case

PUTTUR

Puttur Rural Police have arrested three men for trafficking the banned drug MDM. The accused are Muhammad Ajjal C. (30) from Peruvayal, Sansheer (27) from Koyladi, and Ismail (28) from Wayanad. Officers seized 55 grams of MDM and a scalpel from a Kerala-registered car at Parpunja in Olamogru village while conducting a vehicle check. The suspects were taken into custody, and a case has been registered at Puttur Rural Police Station. Police confirmed that the operation was based on reliable intelligence and conducted under the supervision of SI Gunapala J and staff.

Hindus facing difficulties the country : Seer

The seer urged strict cow slaughter ban, one protection centre per district, and proper use of reserved cowsheds

DAVANAGERE

Seer Vishwaprasanna Tirtha of Pejawar Math said that the condition of Hindus is worrying not only in Bangladesh but also in India. He was speaking to the media in Davanagere.

The seer expressed concern over reports of attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh and said the Government of India should take appropriate action in the matter. He said the safety and dignity of people should be ensured everywhere and added that similar concerns are being raised within the country as well.

Speaking about cow protection, the seer said the government should work seriously towards implementing a ban on cow slaughter. He also suggested that one cow protection centre should be established in every district. According to him, cowsheds that have been reserved for cattle welfare must be used only for that purpose and not diverted for other activities.

During the interaction, he also spoke about the role of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, stating that the organisation works for national security and social service. He said banning such organisations would not be appropriate. The seer further mentioned the proposal to start a Veda study centre in Davanagere. He said efforts are being made to identify a suitable place for the institution, though finding land has been difficult. Once a suitable location is found, he added, several related activities and educational programmes are planned to be developed there. He said such initiatives would help promote traditional learning and cultural values among the younger generation while also strengthening spiritual education in the region.

Koppal has 12,06,287 voters and 1,315 stations; 86.79% mapping done, 1,59,319 voter verifications pending

Political parties asked to appoint booth agents

KOPPAL

District Collector and District Election Officer Dr. Suresh B. Itnal has called on political parties to appoint Booth Level Agents (BLAs) as preparations begin for the comprehensive revision of electoral rolls in the district.

Speaking at a meeting with representatives of political parties at the Deputy Commissioner's office, he said mapping work is currently underway in view of the Special Intensive Revision likely to begin in April 2026. Officials are verifying voter details by comparing the present electoral roll with the 2002 voter list through a mobile-based application.

According to officials, Koppal district has 12,06,287 voters and 1,315 polling stations. So far, 86.79 percent of the mapping work has been completed. Out of this, around 77 percent are voters whose names appeared in the 2002 voter list, while the rest are newly eligible voters who have turned 18. A total of 10,46,968 voters have been mapped and verification of 1,59,319 voters is still pending.

Assembly constituency-wise pending mapping includes 35,562 voters in Kushtagi, 26,741 in Kanakagiri, 36,946 in Gangavathi, 24,532 in Yelaburga and 35,538 in Koppal constituency.

Officials said preparations for the revision process have been ongoing since October 2025. Training has been given to officers from the state level to Booth Level Officers, and awareness programmes have also been conducted for the public and political parties to ensure transparency.

During the process, officers are visiting houses to verify voters above 40 years whose names were in the 2002 list. Young voters are being mapped through family lineage details if their names were not present earlier.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Sidrameshwar said each polling booth should normally have one BLA and they should preferably be voters of the same booth. Representatives of political parties and officials attended the meeting.

BJP leader Channabasappa slams Congress government strongly

SHIVAMOGGA

BJP MLA S. N. Channabasappa on Friday strongly criticised the Congress government in Karnataka, accusing it of inaction, corruption and failure to deliver development for people.

Speaking at a press conference in Shivamogga, he said the recent BJP State Executive meeting held in Bengaluru was successful and leaders have started preparing to bring the party back to power in the State in 2028. According to him, party workers have also decided to organise protests against what he called the failures of the present government.

Channabasappa alleged that the administration has shown little concern for development and has disappointed farmers, youth and common citizens. He claimed corruption had spread across departments and accused the government of irregularities in excise matters, welfare schemes and contract works. He further alleged that farmers are facing severe problems and not receiving the attention they deserve.

The MLA said the government has also failed to create employment opportunities for young people even after many months in power. Funds released to local bodies are reportedly lying unused because tenders have not been called for development works, he added. The BJP, he said, will raise these issues across the State.

Referring to civic issues in Bengaluru, he alleged that the city continues to face a garbage crisis and claimed that BJP leaders raising the issue are being threatened. He also criticised Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar over the matter.

Channabasappa further accused the government of diverting funds meant for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe welfare. BJP district president N.K. Jagadish and several other leaders were present.

Grand celebration marks Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti

BALLARI

The 399th birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was celebrated in a meaningful manner in Ballari, with cultural events, a grand procession and speeches remembering his courage and leadership.

The programme was organised at Dr. Doddanagouda Theatre under the joint auspices of the district administration, zilla panchayat, city corporation and the Department of Kannada and Culture. A large number of people, community leaders and officials took part in the celebration.

Retired Superintendent of Police M. Shivaji Rao, who delivered the special lecture, said the bravery, determination and military skills of Shivaji Maharaj continue to inspire people even today. He described Shivaji as not just a powerful ruler but also a leader who worked for self-rule and protected the land from external forces.

Earlier in the day, a grand procession was taken out in the city as part of the celebrations. The procession began from the Municipal High School grounds and passed through important circles including Gadigi Chennappa Circle and H.R. Gaviyappa Circle before concluding at the theatre where the main function was held. People gathered along the roads to witness the colourful event.

Before the stage programme began, a devotional music performance by Sandhya Colachalam entertained the audience. The event officially started with the lighting of the lamp and floral tributes to the portrait of Shivaji Maharaj.

During the programme, prizes were distributed to winners of the Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Cup-2026 cricket tournament and sports competitions organised for women and children..

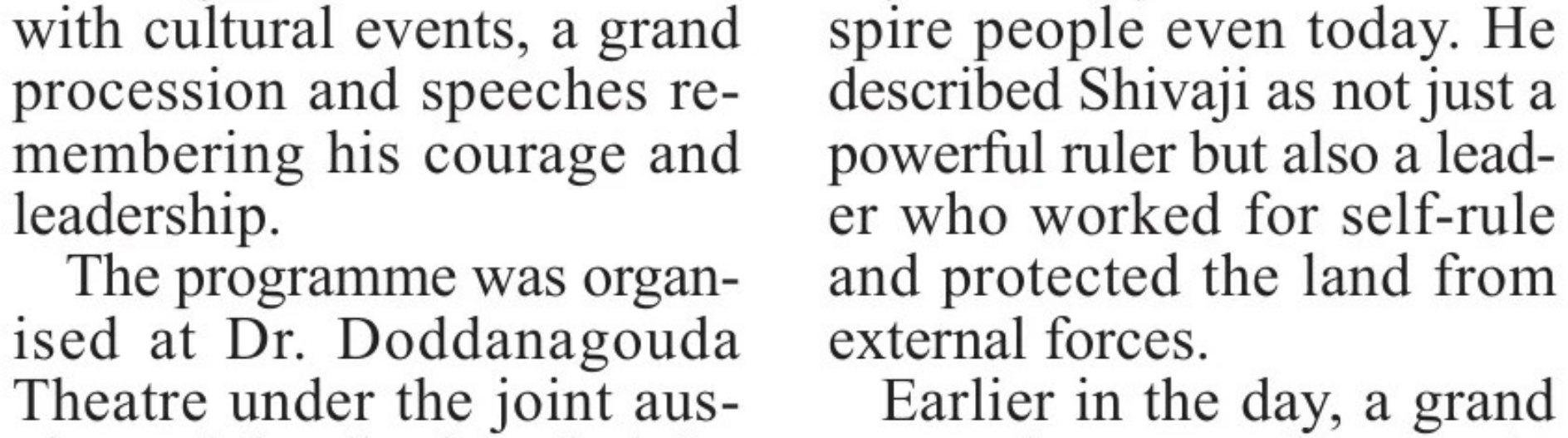
PEACEFUL TOLL MOVEMENT

Leaders unite demanding removal of Brahmarakootlu toll

BANTWAL

A consultation meeting was held at B.C. Road to discuss a united struggle demanding the removal of the toll gate at Brahmarakootlu in the taluk. Representatives of several organisations and public groups took part in the discussion and expressed concern about the problems faced by daily commuters and local residents.

The meeting was chaired by former minister B. Ramanath Rai, who said people in the region have been raising their voice for a long time against the toll collection. He stressed that a peaceful and organised movement would help bring attention to the issue and push authorities to respond.



Munir Katipalla, convener of the Surathkal Toll Gate Anti-Toll Gate Struggle Committee, guided the gathering on how to carry forward the campaign. He explained how similar protests were organised earlier and urged everyone to stay united in the effort.

During the meeting, participants decided to form the "Brahmarakutlu Toll Gate Clearance Struggle Committee, Bantwal" to lead the agitation. Ramanath Rai was unanimously chosen as the honorary president of the committee, while B. Shekhar and Mohan Shetty were selected as conveners.

Leaders also agreed to expand the committee by including more supporters and representatives from different organisations so that the campaign gains wider strength among the public.

As part of the first phase of the protest, a large mass dharna will be held near the Brahmarakootlu toll gate on March 3 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Organisers said the movement will continue in stronger phases until the toll gate is removed. They added that the struggle will remain peaceful but determined, reflecting the united voice of the people of the region.

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COOPERATIVES CAN TRANSFORM FARMERS LIVES

HAVERI

Ahmed emphasized that strong cooperatives help farmers share resources, implement government schemes effectively, and urged members to participate actively, ensuring transparency, accountability, and responsible management of their societies

Strengthening cooperative societies is essential for improving the lives of farmers, Legislative Council Chief Whip Salim Ahmed said while speaking at a training programme for water user cooperative societies in the city recently.

The programme was organised by the Bhadra Achukattu Area Development Authority to guide presidents, secretaries and farmer members on better management and use of water resources.

Addressing the gathering, Ahmed said strong cooperatives help farmers work together, share water fairly and make government schemes reach the right people. He urged members to participate actively and ensure their societies remain transparent and responsible.

MLA and Assembly Deputy Speaker Rudrappa Manappa Lamani, who presided over the event, said irrigation societies must focus on helping farmers at the tail end of canals. He said stronger organisations will bring better farming and rural growth.

Bhadra CADA President Dr K P Anshumat said many societies have been revived this year to improve irrigation management. He added that several societies will receive annual grants while others are being given farm machinery.

Officials also explained record keeping, audits, elections and farmer participation during the training. The district administration distributed financial support and equipment to encourage the societies. Many department officers and local representatives attended the programme.

The initiative aims to make farmers confident about managing water, solving local issues and improving crop results through cooperation. Officials said such awareness programmes will continue so that every farmer understands their role in building strong cooperative institutions. They expressed hope that united efforts between farmers, societies and government officers will bring fair water sharing, better harvests and stable rural livelihoods across the region soon.

Duggamma Jatre reels contest excites Davangere youth

DAVANAGERE

A unique opportunity for young creators has arrived as Team Prabha Vikas and SS Care Trust Student Wing announced the "Duggamma Jatre Reels" competition as part of the Aradhya Devi Sri Durgambika Devi Jatre Mahotsava in Davangere city. The initiative is being led by Davangere MP Prabha Mallikarjun.

Participants are invited to create Instagram reels of 30 to 90 seconds that capture the devotion, celebrations, dance, and vibrant spirit of the fair. The reels must be uploaded to Instagram by February 28, tagging the MP's official handle and using the hashtag #davanagerejatreel.

The competition rules emphasize originality—entries must be the contestant's own work. Reels cannot contain political content, brand promotions, or disrespect religious sentiments. AI-generated reels will not be considered. Contestants' Instagram accounts must remain public until results are announced.

Team
Prabha Vikas

The top three reels will be featured on the official Instagram page, and the ones with the highest likes will receive cash prizes. Organizers highlighted that the competition offers a wonderful platform for youth to showcase creativity while celebrating local culture.

For further details, participants can contact the organizers at 9980769117. This initiative encourages young people to engage with traditional festivities through modern digital media, blending devotion with creativity.

Historic Ranji Trophy final set for Hubballi

HUBBALLI

Cricket lovers in the city are excited as the Ranji Trophy final will be played in Hubballi for the first time. The title clash between Karnataka cricket team and Jammu and Kashmir cricket team will take place from February 24 to 28 at the KSCA Stadium Rajnagar Hubballi.

Preparations for the big match are progressing quickly. Officials from the Board of Control for Cricket in India and the Karnataka State Cricket Association have inspected the stadium and reviewed the pitch and facilities. Curators are working to ensure the ground is ready for the five-day final.

KSCA Dharwad zone convener Veeranna Savadi expressed happiness that the city was chosen to host such an important match. He said the Ranji Trophy is one of the most respected tournaments in Indian domestic cricket and thanked the officials who made the final possible in Hubballi.

According to organisers, the Jammu and Kashmir team has already arrived and will begin practice sessions soon. The Karnataka team is expected to reach the city on February 22 and practice for two days before the match.

QUICK READ

Police seek relatives of unidentified deceased

Vijayapura

Police have appealed to the public to help trace the family of an unidentified man who died at the Central Bus Stand on February 13, 2026, reportedly due to illness. A case has been registered at Gandhi Chowk Police Station. The deceased, aged around 40–50, is about 5.3 feet tall, with a normal build, wheatish complexion, long face, and black-and-grey hair and beard. He wore a black jacket, cream shirt, blue jeans, and a blue Issa innerwear. A red thread on his wrist and a black waist thread were noted. Anyone with information is urged to contact the station.

Five children seriously injured in stray dog attack

KALABURAGI

Five children were seriously injured when stray dogs attacked them while playing in front of a house in Devinagar Layout. The dogs caused severe injuries to the children's eyes, ears, and chest. All five victims have been admitted to GIMS Hospital for treatment. Residents of Devinagar Layout have appealed to municipal authorities to take immediate action to control the stray dog menace and prevent further incidents. Local officials are expected to increase monitoring and consider safety measures to protect children in the area.

Pattanashetti accuses MLA Yatnal of land irregularities

Vijayapura

Former Minister Appasaheb Pattanashetti launched a sharp attack on city MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal, alleging his involvement in large-scale land encroachments and amassing assets worth crores of rupees. Speaking at a press conference on Friday, Pattanashetti claimed that land irregularities in the city increased during Yatnal's tenure and that "no one has indulged in corruption on such a scale as him." He accused Yatnal of directly participating in land grabbing and illegal accumulation of wealth. Referring to Yatnal's recent statements on land encroachment.

Pralhad Joshi slams youth Congress AI protest

The Union Minister highlighted India's AI, semiconductor, and tech achievements, criticizing disruptions that undermine the nation's growth story

KALABURAGI

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi sharply criticised the Youth Congress for protesting during the Artificial Intelligence Summit held in Kalaburagi, calling it an effort to undermine India's development initiatives.

Speaking to the media, Joshi said the Congress party had failed to achieve significant progress when it was in power. "When they were in office, they accomplished little. Now, as India advances rapidly, they cannot accept our growth," he added.

Highlighting India's achievements, the Union Minister noted that the country is emerging as a global leader in AI, semiconductor manufacturing, and technology-driven development. "These summits aim to showcase India's progress and future potential. Disrupting them shows disregard for the nation's growth story," he said.

Joshi alleged that the protest reflected frustration and jealousy. He accused Rahul Gandhi of encouraging party workers to create unnecessary controversy. "Attempts to tarnish India's image at a time of global recognition are highly condemnable," he added. He reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to advancing India as a global technology hub and promoting AI-driven growth for the benefit of the country. Joshi urged all stakeholders to support initiatives that foster innovation and strengthen India's position on the world stage. The minister concluded that development-focused events like the AI Summit are crucial for attracting global attention, investment, and collaboration in India's technology sector.

IPPB Manager Anand Sagar highlighted India Post Payments Bank's DBT services reaching 10 crore people, enhancing citizens' financial access

Postal services reach marginalized communities

GADAG

Postal Department services are being expanded to reach the most marginalized sections of society, said Gadag Divisional Postal Superintendent S.S. Shirahatti.

Speaking after launching the Postal Connection Campaign at Basaveshwara Kalyana Mantapa in Hammigi, Mundargi taluk on Friday, he urged citizens to actively use these services. "The Postal Department is no longer limited to correspondence. It provides banking, savings schemes, insurance, pension distribution, online payments, and parcel delivery," he said, highlighting the range of services now available.

IPPB Manager Anand Sagar added that India Post Payments Bank has made significant strides in electronic financial transactions, delivering DBT services to over 10 crore people in just seven years. He emphasized that the initiative will continue to strengthen access to banking and financial services for citizens.

Assistant Postmaster V. Sunilkumar, Deputy Postmaster Halappa Vamanakeri, and other postal officials spoke about the campaign's objectives and encouraged villagers to take advantage of the available services. Local representatives, including Gram Panchayat President Shivanand Meti and members, were also present.

Hundreds of residents participated in the campaign, accessing various services offered by the Postal Department and learning how to use them effectively.

Shirahatti emphasized that through such outreach programs, postal services will become accessible to everyone, including those in remote and underserved areas, bringing essential banking and postal facilities closer to people's homes.

Photo: Divisional Postal Superintendent S.S. Shirahatti addressing villagers at the launch of the postal connectivity campaign in Hammigi, Mundargi taluk.

DC treks historic hill, promises tourism boost

BALLARI

Deputy Commissioner Nagendra Prasad K. visited the historic hill of Sanganakallu and trekked to Hiregudda to inspect the site and explore possibilities for tourism development.

During the visit, he said the Sanganakallu area is one of the most important historical locations in Ballari district. The rocky hills here reveal valuable information about the lives of Neolithic humans who lived thousands of years ago. Because of its archaeological value, the district administration will give high priority to its preservation and development.

The Deputy Commissioner closely examined the rare rock carvings and ancient drawings found on top of the hill. These carvings are believed to belong to the Neolithic period. He said protecting these remains is essential as they reflect the history and lifestyle of early human settlements in the region.

He added that steps will be taken to develop the place in a way that is friendly for tourists while protecting its natural beauty and historical importance. Scientific studies conducted in the region have already helped historians understand the culture and daily life of ancient communities.

The administration plans to provide basic facilities such as clean drinking water, proper footpaths to reach the hill, information boards and guidance systems for visitors, researchers and students.

Mandya youth urged to follow Sarvajna's ideals

MANDYA

Saint Kavi Sarvajna sowed the dream of an equal society, and the youth should follow his values to build fairness in today's world, said B.P. Prakash, Chairman of the District Urban Development Authority. He spoke while inaugurating the Sant Kavi Sarvajna Jayanti program at Gandhi Bhavan, organized by the District Administration and Kannada and Culture Department.

Lighting the lamp, Prakash emphasized the importance of adopting Sarvajna's principles to nurture equality and respect in society. L. Sandesh, Chairman of the District Backward Classes Forum, added that Sarvajna's vachanas are not only a treasure for one community but a cultural asset for all Kannadigas, and young people must carry his messages forward.

Dr. M.P., Managing Director of Mysore Credit Eye Institute, highlighted that Sarvajna became omniscient by learning from everyone, and continuous learning is vital for all. Sarvajna, born in 1520 in Ambaluru Masuri, Haveri district, reformed society through over 7,000 vachanas, emphasizing friendship, equality, and respect. His ideals, like Thiruvalluvar for Tamils and Vemana for Telugus, remain relevant even today.

Krishna, President of the District Potters Awareness Association, urged organizations to celebrate jayantis meaningfully and pass Sarvajna's principles to future generations.

Minister orders quick action on water problems

MANVI

The minister stated Manvi has 393 borewells, 61 lakes, and 124 RO plants; he directed inspections, repairs, pipeline installation, and private borewell support if needed.

N. S. Boseraju, Minister for Minor Irrigation, Science and Technology, directed officials to take urgent steps to solve drinking water and electricity problems in Manvi and Sirawara taluks as summer begins.

Speaking at a press conference held at the tourist centre in Bhasmapatna, the minister said officials must work quickly to prevent water shortages in both urban and rural areas. He also asked authorities to speed up development works, including projects under the Jal Jeevan Mission and AMRUT Mission.

The minister said there are 393 borewells functioning across Manvi taluk. In addition, the region has 61 lakes and 124 RO water plants serving the public. He instructed officials to inspect these facilities personally, submit reports and take immediate steps for repairs, pumping arrangements and pipeline installation. If required, help from private borewell owners should also be taken, he added.

Within Manvi municipality limits, there are 136 borewells, of which 93 are currently functioning. Arrangements have been made for repairing 40 borewells and pumping from 42 borewells, along with minor repair works and four water tankers to meet emergency needs.

Under the Amrutha water project, the town will receive 6.5 MLD of water along with lake water supply. Officials are also laying about 65 kilometres of pipelines and constructing overhead tanks near Jayanagar and APMC at a cost of ₹20 crore. In total, eight water tanks will support supply in the town.

The minister said Manvi residents will receive nearly 12 MLD of water through various schemes, including supply from the Krishna River. A proposal worth ₹12 crore has also been sent to the State government to improve drinking water supply in seven wards. Several local leaders and officials were present.

Bidar launches Ramabai Ambedkar Jayanti program

BIDAR

The city is gearing up to celebrate the 128th birth anniversary of Ramabai Ambedkar with a series of educational and cultural events. On Friday, the brochure for the IAS and KAS exam preparation workshop, legal awareness sessions, and district-level cultural celebration-2026 was released at Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Circle.

The event is scheduled for February 26 at the district theater. The brochure was officially unveiled by Dr. Kashinath Chelva, President of the Mane Makhose Ambedkar Abhiyan Implementation Committee, in the presence of several dignitaries and organizers.

Among those present were Mahesh Gornalkar, President of Buddha Light Trust and Coordinator of Ramabai Jayantyotsava Samiti, Prakash Ravana, Sharanu Phule, Srinivas Dayal, Tukaram Nelagi, Uttam Kempe, Ishwar Kempe, and Honorary President Ushabai Bansude. Other attendees included Nandamma Kunde, Kalpana Gornalkar, Seshikala Sharma, Sonamma Kasture, Kamalamma Santpure, Gangamma Phule, Panchphula Gaikwad, Sudhamani Gupta, Sangeeta Kamble, Kalavati Kalekar, Sharada Alandkar, Indumati Sagar, Ujjwala Padasale, Sridevi Singhe, Kaveri Kalekar, Chinnamma Ladha, and Veena Gupta.

LAND DONATION INITIATIVE

Prabhati Dharamsingh donates land for Yadrami Praja Soudha

JEVARGI

Prabhati Dharamsingh, wife of former Chief Minister late N. Dharamsingh, has generously donated five acres of land for the construction of a 'Praja Soudha' in Yadrami taluk. The initiative aims to centralize government services, including the Tahsildar office, under one roof for the convenience of the public.

The project is being developed jointly by the Karnataka Khadi and Rural Development Board (KKRDB) and the Revenue Department. Earlier, the foundation stone was laid by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, and AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge. Prabhati Dharamsingh visited the Jewargi Sub-Registrar's office on Thursday to sign the registration documents formalizing the land donation to the government.

Jewargi Tahsildar Mallanna Yalgoda, Yadrami Tahsildar Yallappa Subedar, and local leaders including Razak Muniyar, Hayyalappa Gangakar, and Mehboob Patel were present. The donation is seen as a significant step toward improving administrative efficiency and public service access in Yadrami.

DC warns officials to make district begging-free

BIDAR

District Collector Shilpa Sharma has warned that strict disciplinary action will be taken against officials who fail to cooperate in the effort to make the district free from begging.

Speaking at a progress review meeting of the Women and Child Development Department at the District Collector's office, she stressed the need for all departments to work together. The move comes after an increase in incidents of women and children begging at major circles and public places in the city.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed officials to create widespread awareness about welfare schemes running under Mission Shakti Yojana. These include Sakhi One Stop Centre, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Swadhara, Santwana services, hostels for working women and girls, Women Empowerment Units and maternity benefit programs.

She said officials must ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive the benefits of these schemes without delay. Under the maternity assistance scheme, ₹59.50 lakh has been directly transferred to beneficiaries after the birth of their first child,.

International conferences help students think better

KALABURAGI

Taking part in international conferences helps students and teachers improve their research ability and thinking skills, said educationist Basavaraj Deshmukh on Friday.

He was speaking after inaugurating the third International Conference on Integrated Intelligence and Communication Systems organised at Sharanabasava University in Kalaburagi. The programme was held at the university's Doddappa Appa Sabha Mantapa with the participation of researchers, professors and students.

Deshmukh said such conferences create opportunities for academic discussion and help young minds learn new technologies and research methods. When students interact with scholars from different countries, their knowledge grows and their confidence also improves, he added.

Speakers also remembered the contribution of Sharanabasavappa Appaji, the eighth Mahadasoha Peethadhipati of Sharanabasaveshwara Sansthan, for encouraging educational and research activities.

Dr. Rodolfo Oliveira from Lisbon, Dr. Dinesh Singh of IIT Mandi, Dr. K.L. Hemalat.

QUICK READ

Preparatory meet for Jayanti Celebrations today

CHITRADURGA

A preparatory meeting for celebrating the Jayanti of Renukacharya on March 1 and Yogi Narayana Yathindra on March 3 will be held on February 21 at the District Collector's Office Hall. The meeting on Renukacharya Jayanti is scheduled for 11 am, followed by the Yogi Narayana Yathindra Jayanti discussion at 11.30 am. District Collector T. Venkatesh will preside. Officials and community leaders have been invited to attend and offer suggestions to ensure meaningful and well-organized celebrations across the district.

One-Day awareness workshop for final year students

CHIKKABALLAPURA

A one-day awareness workshop on the Incubation Scheme under the RAMP program will be held on February 24 at 10:30 AM at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Auditorium, Government First Grade College, Chikkaballapura. The event is jointly organized by the Industries and Commerce Department, District Industrial Centre, KCTU, and the college. Final year degree students studying in the district are encouraged to attend and benefit from the session. For more details, students can contact the Joint Director of the District Industrial Centre, Chikkaballapura, at 08156-273303.

Karnataka exam authority fined Rs. 15K for service lapse

CHIKKABALLAPURA

The Chikkaballapur District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has imposed a fine of Rs. 15,000 on the Karnataka Examination Authority and Administrator for failing to admit Gangaraj D.A. of Dronakunte village to an MBA program despite his PGCET rank of 29503. The complainant filed a case (CC No. 34/2025) citing deficiency in service. After examining the matter, Chairman Kumar N. and members H. Janardhan ordered the respondents to pay the fine and Rs. 6,500 litigation costs to Gangaraj within the stipulated time. The ruling highlights accountability in educational administration.

World Social Justice Day: Equality key to progress

Dr. Malige cited Ambedkar, urging youth to uphold social justice, ensuring equal opportunities and fundamental rights for all

CHITRADURGA

Social justice is essential for the overall development of society and plays a crucial role in national progress, said Dr. J. Kariappa Malige, Principal of Chitradurga Government Arts College (Autonomous). He was speaking at the World Social Justice Day program held at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Auditorium on Friday, jointly organized by Mera Yuva Bharat and the college's National Service Scheme Units-1 and 2.

Dr. Malige emphasized that social justice addresses the deep-rooted inequalities in society. To achieve peace, harmony, and equality, it is necessary to remove disparities based on caste, creed, religion, and gender, he said. He highlighted that every individual should be treated equally to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society.

Quoting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Dr. Malige said that society must be structured around the social justice principles enshrined in the Constitution, and youth play a pivotal role in this mission. He stressed the importance of providing equal opportunities to Dalits, backward classes, women, and minorities who have been excluded from mainstream development. True social justice, he said, ensures that fundamental rights are respected for all.

Advocate A. Ismail Zabiullah delivered a special lecture on the significance of social justice. Government Arts College Program Officer B.K. Basavaraj, Mera Yuva Bharat Assistant G.P. Bharat, along with professors and students, were present and participated actively in the event.

The program highlighted the need to promote fairness, equality, and inclusion to strengthen India's democratic framework.

Judge M. Vijay inspected the suicide site, questioned staff, reviewed facilities and records, and ordered immediate safety and management improvements

Judge inspects residential school after student suicide

CHITRADURGA

ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಡಿ.ಎಸ್.ರತ್ನ ಮತ್ತು ಶ್ರೀ ಡಿ.ವಿ.ಶರಣಪ್ಪ ಸಭಾಂಗಣ

In the aftermath of the tragic suicide of 16-year-old Kotresh, a Class 10 student at DVS Residential School in Bharamsagar village, a team of officials led by Senior Civil Judge and Member Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority, M. Vijay, visited the school on Friday for a thorough inspection.

Kotresh, son of Gurulingappa from Kariyammanahalli village, reportedly jumped from the school's third floor at around 7:14 am on Monday, February 16. A complaint regarding the incident has been registered at Bharamsagar Rural Police Station.

During the inspection, Judge M. Vijay and the team examined the suicide site and questioned the school principal, teachers, and staff. They also reviewed classrooms, basic student facilities, and the institution's official records and files. The judge instructed the principal to immediately address and rectify the shortcomings identified in the school's management and safety protocols.

Officials present during the inspection included Deputy Director of School Education and Literacy Department Manjunath, District Child Protection Officer Premamurthy K., Women and Child Development Officer Gangappa, Child Protection Officer Manjunath H.N., Deputy Coordinator of Child Protection Unit Hanumanthappa B.A.A., Education Department officials Sampath Kumar and Murthachar, and DVS Treasurer Pradeep Kumar. The team emphasized the urgent need for improved safety measures, mental health support, and strict monitoring to prevent such incidents in the future. Parents and students were also advised to report any concerns promptly.

Sarvajna's teachings belong to entire society: Tahsildar

CHIKKABALLAPURA

The vachanas of the saint poet Sarvajna are meant for the whole society and not for any single community, said Tahsildar Rashmi on Friday.

She spoke after paying floral tributes to the portrait of Sarvajna during the Shri Santkavi Sarvajna Jayanti programme organised by the district administration, zilla panchayat and Kannada and Culture Department at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Bhavan in the city.

Rashmi said Sarvajna was a great thinker who travelled widely and understood society deeply. Through his famous tripadi vachanas, he gave valuable messages to people and tried to correct social problems. His writings were in simple spoken language, making them easy for ordinary people to understand.

She noted that Sarvajna opposed caste discrimination centuries ago and spread awareness about equality in society. His verses discuss moral values, social life and religious ideas, guiding people in the right direction.

According to her, every tripadi written by Sarvajna reflects real life and encourages people to live with honesty, unity and responsibility. She urged the public and students to follow his ideas and pass them on to the next generation.

Chikkaballapur begins boys' 5th class sports selection

CHIKKABALLAPUR

The Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, Chikkaballapur, has announced the selection process for boys seeking admission to class 5 in the junior hockey and football categories. The trials will be held across all taluk central stadiums from 23 February to 2 March, with the district-level selection on 2 March at MV District Stadium from 10 am to 4:30 pm.

Eligible participants must be current class 4 students, under 11 years of age, and meet minimum height requirements: 142 cm for hockey and 140 cm for football. Boys must carry Aadhaar card, two passport-size photos, and a date-of-birth document.

The first stage includes physical fitness tests measuring strength, agility, endurance, dexterity, and speed. Candidates scoring above 50% will qualify for the second round, after which application forms for sports hostel admission will be issued. No travel or daily allowance will be provided to selected athletes.

For more details, students may contact the Assistant Director of Youth Empowerment and Sports.

Helipad ride program showcases Mandya to youth

MANDYA

A three-day helicopter ride exhibition has been organized in Mandya to showcase the city's image to local youth, said Agriculture and District In-charge Minister N. Chaluvarayaswamy. He urged everyone to make the most of this unique opportunity.

Chaluvarayaswamy inaugurated the helipad ride at Chikka Mandya as part of the Budanur Utsav 2026 celebrations. He said the program combines tourism with development initiatives and offers residents a new way to experience the district from above. "The first Budanur Utsav was a great success, and this year we aim to make it even more engaging for all," he added.

The minister also highlighted the successful completion of sports and Rangoli competitions during the festival, praising the active participation of the public. He further encouraged citizens to attend the awareness workshop on March 7 at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Bhavan, focusing on the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Prevention of Untouchability Act, emphasizing the importance of community involvement. The event was attended by District MLA P. Ravikumar, Maddur MLA K.M. Uday, District Magistrate Dr. Kumar, CEO K.R. Nandini, Superintendent of Police V.J. Shobha Rani, Sub-Divisional Officer Shivamurthy, Tahsildar Vishwanath, and other officials, who witnessed the helicopter rides and interacted with the youth.

KANNADA POET TRIBUTE

SARVAJNA'S TEACHINGS STILL GUIDE SOCIETY

CHITRADURGA

Additional Deputy Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy said the great Kannada poet Sarvajna played an important role in correcting social evils through his powerful verses. He was speaking after offering floral tributes to the poet's portrait during Sarvajna Jayanti celebrations held at the Deputy Commissioner's office hall in Chitradurga on Friday.

The programme was organised jointly by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, Municipal Council and several community organisations. Speaking on the occasion, Kumaraswamy said that just as the 12th century Shivasharanas worked for social reform, Sarvajna in the 16th century reached the hearts of common people through his simple tripadi poems. At a time when literature was limited to scholars, Sarvajna wrote in easy Kannada so ordinary people could understand his message.

He strongly opposed superstition, caste discrimination and social injustice. Kumaraswamy said Sarvajna became a symbol of wisdom by learning from everyone and turning life experience into knowledge. He added that modern society needs not only education for marks but also moral values inspired by such thinkers. He expressed concern that crimes and cruelty are increasing despite higher literacy levels.

Lecturer Suresh B said Sarvajna's tripadis remain relevant even today. He described the poet as a philosopher who conveyed deep meaning in just three lines. His writings stressed that a person's character is more important than caste or birth.

Officials, community leaders and members of various organisations attended the programme and remembered the timeless message of the great poet.

Free UPSC guidance program attracts over 500

Dr. Akash S. inaugurated the event, urging students to pursue IAS for public service, emphasizing responsibility, societal welfare, and warning against seeking the role solely for money.

CHITRADURGA

A large number of students took part in a free guidance programme for competitive examinations organised by the Nerlige Foundation in the city. The event, titled "Belaku" (Light), was held at Maharshi Valmiki Bhavan to guide aspirants preparing for UPSC and other major exams.

More than 500 students from different parts of the district attended the programme with great enthusiasm. The initiative aimed to provide proper direction and motivation for students who wish to enter public service.

Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. Akash S. inaugurated the event and addressed the gathering.

He told students that becoming an IAS officer is not just about getting a job but about taking responsibility for society.

He said those who choose the civil services only for money will not succeed, and only those who care about people and public welfare should pursue this path.

District Superintendent of Police Ranjit Kumar Bandaru explained the stages of UPSC preparation in detail. He shared his own preparation experience and spoke about useful books, important subjects and reliable websites that students can use during their studies.

Assistant Commissioners Dr. Venkatesh Nayak and Kantaraj also addressed the students. They highlighted the importance of discipline, determination and continuous effort in preparing for competitive examinations.

Hiriyur Executive Officer Dr. Pramod and Autonomous Government Arts College Principal Dr. J. Kariappamalige encouraged students to remain focused and confident in their goals.

Mamata Nerlige, founder of the Nerlige Foundation, announced that the organisation will soon launch an AI-based mock test platform called "Prep Nation." She said the platform will allow students across the country to practice free online tests.

The programme received an overwhelming response from students.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, PADMA RAO W/o N RAMA RAO, R/o A-403, Renaissance Brindavan 13, Subramanyapura Main Road, Opposite Vishal Mega Mart, Uttarahalli, Subramanyapura, Bangalore South, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560061, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as N R PADMA.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, HARSHA KUMARI D/o MOHAN LAL, R/o No-450, Flat Bearing No-4, Ananda Lahari 2nd Floor, AMS Layout, 3 Cross Road, Vidyaranyapura, Bengaluru, Karnataka560097, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AARTHI SUTHAR.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, B AKASH ANTHONY S/o BALRAJ, R/o 31, Behind Garden City College, Dheeraj Gowda Layout, Kithiganur, Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore South, Bangalore, Karnataka560036, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AKASH ANTONY B.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VINAYAK ASHOK BIRJE S/o ASHOK TAMANNA BIRJE, R/o H No 566, Kangrali Khurd, Belgaum, Kangali Kh, Hukkeri, Belagavi, Karnataka-590010, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as VINAYAK BIRJE.

NAME CHANGE

I **Sanjana Rajpal** aged about 21 years, D/o Rajesh R Rajpal ,No.12, Flat No. 002, Naksha Prime Square, 2nd Floor ,3rd Cross, Swasti Main Road, Lakshmi Road Cross, Shanti Nagar, P O Wilson Garden, Bangalore-560027 .I wish to inform you that my name has been changed from **Sanjana Rajpal** to **Sanjana Rajesh Rajpal** and the said names belongs to one & the same person. Affidavit dated 11th January 2026, before Notary Smt. **Hemalatha. P**

NAME CHANGE

I, **MASTHAN KHAN GULNAZ BEGUM**, W/o Masthan Khan, resident of No 75/17, 2nd Cross, S R Layout, Behind Shams School, Belahalli Cross, Kogilu Main Road, Bangalore-560064, have changed my name to **GULNAZ BEGUM**, vide affidavit dated: 19.02.2026, before Notary CHANDRA SHEKAR.M, Bangalore.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to public at large **Mr.H M Chandrashekar S/O Mahadevappa,** Residing at #62, Bilavapriya Nilaya, Maruthi Nagar,3rd Cross Herohalli Cros, Mahadeshwaranagar. Bangalore North, Karnataka - 570091. He has lost the Registered Original Sale Deed of Doc No.SRI-1-04658-2015-16 dated on 18 -01-2016, he has lost at Near Attur bus stop Accordingly he has lodged the complainant on Bangalore City Police with E-Lost dated 20/02/2026 Report No.2073549/2026.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site No.62,Katha No.1141, Assessment No. 7/28, BBMP Ward No. 72, Situated at Herohalli Village, Yashavanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Measuring East to West : 35 feet and North to South 30 feet, in all measuring 1050 Sq,ft bounded on **East by:** Road, **West by:** Other's Property, **North by:** Site No. 62A, **South by:** Site No. 61C. If anyone finding the aforesaid document is hereby requested to handover the same to our office at the address mentioned hereunder.

HARISHA .S, Advocate
# 1479. DRLS PLAZA.
UNION BANK BUILDING. T DASARAHALLI,
Bengaluru-560057. Mob No. 9060950265.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client **Mr. Mallesh S/O Shamanaik** residing at No 176, 8th Cross KEB Office Road, Ganesh Layout, Anjananagara, Bangalore North, Karnataka - 560091. My clients have owned the property by through Registered Sale deed Document No.8266-2013-14, dated: 16-12-2013, now my clint availing loan from Piramal Finance Ltd, if any person/persons objecting for the proposed purchase or having any rights, title and interest over the schedule property may forward their objections or claims to the undersigned in writing with supporting documents within seven (07) days from the date of this publication. if there were to be no response to this notice within the time stipulated, my client will proceed with the Loan Piramal Finance Ltd. Any response after the expiry of the stipulated time,the same will be ignored.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site no 176, Assessment No.38,E PID No. 2162875023, BBMP Ward No. 72, situated at Herohalli village,Yashavanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Built on site measuring East to west : 30 feet and North to South: 40 feet Totally 1200 Sq feet, and bounded on **East By :** Site No.177, **West By :** Site No.175, **North By :** Site No. 171, **South By :** 20 Feet Road.

HARISHA .S, Advocate
#1479. DRLS PLAZA, UNION BANK BUILDING.
T DASARAHALLI, Bengaluru - 560 057.
Email : harishsgowda48@gmail.com
Mob No. 9060950265.

QUICK READ

Delhi HC issues notice on bail plea of wrestler Sushil in murder case

New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday issued notice on a bail plea filed by Olympian wrestler Sushil Kumar in the 2021 murder case of junior national wrestling champion Sagar Dhankar and sought a detailed status report from the Delhi Police. A single-judge Bench of Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani directed the investigating agency to file a comprehensive status report along with the nominal roll of the accused from jail authorities. The matter has been listed for further hearing on May 4. Sushil Kumar has moved the Delhi High Court challenging the February 6 order of a Rohini court rejecting his second regular bail application.

Tantri accuses Vijayan govt of orchestrating his arrest

KOLLAM

In a dramatic turn in the Sabarimala gold theft case, Tantri Kantarar Rajeevar has accused the Pinarayi Vijayan government of orchestrating his arrest as an act of political revenge, even as the Kollam Vigilance Court granted him bail after 41 days in remand. It was on Thursday that the tantri walked out on bail. The explosive allegations, contained in the court's bail order, have added a fresh political dimension to the high-profile case. The tantri argued before the court that he was deliberately implicated in the case because of his strong stand against the entry of women of menstruating age into the Sabarimala temple during the controversy that gripped the state in 2018 during the then two month long festival season.

Priyanka Targets Sarma Over Governance, Allegations

Congress leader says Assam needs jobs, not fear-based political attacks

GUWAHATI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra launched a sharp attack on Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing him of indulging in personal attacks instead of focusing on governance, development, and employment opportunities for the state's youth.

Responding to allegations made by Sarma against Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi over alleged links with Pakistan, Priyanka Gandhi said it was inappropriate to target families and children through what she described as false claims. Taking an apparent dig at the Chief Minister, she remarked that political discourse should not descend into personal attacks.

There is no need to attack someone's family or children by spreading lies. Instead of doing this, the Chief Minister should work for the development of Assam. What the youth of Assam need today are jobs and employment opportunities, she said.

Referring to the political climate ahead of the Assembly elections, Priyanka Gandhi alleged that the Chief Minister was resorting to fear-mongering tactics as the polls draw closer. She claimed that such strategies reflect insecurity rather than confidence in governance achievements.

Strongly defending Gaurav Gogoi, she described him as a positive leader committed to value-based politics in Assam. Gaurav Gogoi is a positive individual who wants to do politics rooted in values in Assam. The Chief Minister is scared as elections approach, she said.

Priyanka Gandhi further dismissed the allegations regarding Gogoi's alleged Pakistan links, asserting that the people of Assam would not accept such accusations without credible evidence. The accusations levelled by the Chief Minister against Gaurav Gogoi are not something the people of Assam will believe, she stated firmly.

The Congress leader also weighed in on the controversy involving popular Assamese singer Zubeen Garg, urging political parties to refrain from dragging artistes into political battles. Zubeen Garg is the soul of Assam. He is an individual who stands above politics. There should be no politics over Zubeen Garg, she said, describing him as a beloved cultural icon of the state.

Her remarks come amid intensifying political exchanges in Assam as parties prepare for the upcoming Assembly elections.

Hussain Defends Welfare Schemes Amid Freebies Debate

NEW DELHI

BJP leader says aid targets poor, not taxpayers or wealthy citizens.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Shahnawaz Hussain on Friday defended welfare schemes aimed at supporting the poor, following sharp observations by the Supreme Court on the culture of pre-election freebies. Hussain asserted that government assistance is carefully targeted at those genuinely in need and is not meant for financially capable citizens.

Those who are below the poverty line, who do not have two proper meals a day, giving them food and taking care of them is important. When the country rises above the poverty line and becomes a developed nation, many such forms of assistance may not be needed, Hussain said. He emphasized that such measures ensure help reaches vulnerable sections of society, adding that no 'freebies' are being given to taxpayers or those who are financially capable.

His remarks came after the Supreme Court expressed concern over what it described as a growing culture of indiscriminate largesse by state governments. The court cautioned that unchecked subsidies could undermine fiscal discipline and hamper long-term nation-building efforts. The observations were made while hearing a plea by Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Ltd (TNPDCL), which challenged a 2024 amendment in the electricity law related to the provision of free electricity in Tamil Nadu. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, along with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, questioned whether governments were prioritising short-term political appeasement over sustainable infrastructure development.

The Bench observed that while welfare support for those unable to afford electricity or education is understandable, blanket subsidies without distinguishing between the needy and the financially secure amount to appeasement.

Congress found Tamil Nadu toehold though allies

CHENNAI

As Tamil Nadu gears up for Assembly election, tensions continue to escalate between the ruling DMK and its principal ally, the Congress, with the latter's regional leaders demanding to contest more seats and seeking a power sharing arrangement in state government. For long, the Congress has been relegated to the sidelines in state politics. Now, a section of the state leadership wants a piece of the pie. The dispute centres on the Congress' demands for a formal role in state government – including Cabinet berths and the DMK leadership's insistence on an administration without coalition. Some reports suggest the Congress may even be exploring ties with actor Vijay's new party TVK, reflecting unease with the DMK's dominance, further irking the principal partner.

Religious, Cultural Revival Gains Momentum Under Modi Leadership

LINGSUGUR

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said India is witnessing strong religious and cultural revival under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He was speaking after inaugurating the newly built Sri Veeranagamma Devi Temple at Gejjalagatta in Lingsugur of Raichur district.

Addressing the gathering, Joshi said India is a country with deep cultural roots and rich traditions. Knowledge, science, religion and customs have shaped the nation for centuries. Today, the world is recognising India's heritage and values, he added.

The Minister said people are free to worship any deity, but life must be guided by justice, truth, peace and righteousness as taught by Sanatana Dharma. Beyond rituals, he stressed the importance of "human dharma" or humanity in daily life.

He said untouchability has no place in society and called upon religious leaders to work towards unity and social harmony. Everyone must join hands to remove discrimination and strengthen the nation, he noted.

Joshi also highlighted the Centre's "Ramayana Circuit" spiritual tourism initiative to connect people, especially children, to important places linked to Lord Rama. Special train journeys are being organised to 15 religious destinations.

The temple consecration was led by Dr K.N. Narasimha Adiga, chief priest of Kollur Mookambika Temple. Several leaders, including Chalavadi Narayanaswamy and C.T. Ravi, were present.

US VEDIC SCHOLAR DAVID FRAWLEY MEETS CM YOGI ADITYANATH

LUCKNOW

Renowned Vedic scholar Dr. David Frawley met Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his official residence on Friday. Though it was a courtesy meet, the renowned Vedic scholar sought to impress upon the Chief Minister about various advantages and merits of Yoga and Ayurveda, in pursuance of a happy and healthy life. The Chief Minister's office (CMO) shared a picture of the meeting, in which the duo discussed and deliberated on various aspects of Yoga, Ayurveda, and Sanatan culture. Renowned American Vedic scholar David Frawley met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow and had a detailed discussion on Yoga, Ayurveda and Sanatan culture, the CMO said in a post on X.

Youth Congress Protests Disrupt India AI Summit

NEW DELHI

Members of the Indian Youth Congress staged a dramatic protest inside Bharat Mandapam on Friday during the India AI Impact Summit 2026, raising slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Central government over alleged unemployment, inflation and concerns regarding the reported India–US trade deal.

According to officials, several Youth Congress workers removed their shirts and shouted slogans such as PM is compromised before security personnel intervened. Some protesters stood topless in front of an India AI Summit display board, clicking photographs and attempting to draw attention to their demonstration. The incident occurred while the high-profile international summit was underway, attended by senior government officials, industry leaders and foreign delegates. Security personnel deployed at the venue quickly acted to prevent further disruption and escorted the demonstrators out of the premises. The protesters were detained and taken away to ensure that the event proceeded without interruption. Authorities said it was not immediately clear how the workers managed to gain entry into the heavily secured venue, where thousands of participants, including international guests, were present.

Mizoram Marks Statehood, Highlights Strategic Growth

AIZAWL

Mizoram Governor General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh (Retd) on Friday underscored the state's strategic importance along India's international borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh, stating that its unique location strengthens the country's Act East Policy amid a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Addressing the people on the occasion of Statehood Day, the Governor highlighted key achievements that have enhanced Mizoram's connectivity and economic prospects. He noted that on September 13.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

IN THE COURT OF THE I ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
C. Mis.No. 1117/2025

Petitioner: Sri. Chandrappa. K, S/o Late. Hanumantharayappa, aged about 63 years, R/at Kantanakunte Village, Mallathahalli Post, Kasaba Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District and others

-V/s-

Respondent: Registrar of Birth and death, The Tahshildar, Doddaballapura Taluk, Doddaballapura.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the Petitioner has filed the above petition under Section 13 (3) And 14 of Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 for seeking the death certificate of the mother of petitioner by name **LATE. SUBBAMMA** W/o LATE HANUMANTHARAYAPPA who died on 16.11.1978 at Kantanakunte Village, Kasaba Hobli, Mallathahalli Post, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.

In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an advocate duly authorized before the above said court on **27/03/2026** In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex-parte order.

Given under my hand and seal of the Court on this 20/02/2026

By order of the Court, Chief Ministerial Officer, Prl Civil Judge & JMFC, Doddaballapura

Muniraju. S.K, Advocate
No.3, S/G. Complex, 5th Main Road, Opposite to Court, 4th Ward, Rojipura, Doddaballapur Town.

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT
Office of the Commissioner for
Transport and Road Safety,1st Floor, T.T.M.C. Building,
B.M.T.C. Complex, Shanthinagar, Bangalore

No.CT/F&B-3/PR-106/2025-26 **Date: 19-02-2026**

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Bids are invited by Transport Department to Empanel Original Equipment Manufacturers for Automated Testing stations, in Transport Department, Government of Karnataka. Bid documents shall be submitted through Online in e-Procurement portal only. For more details please log on to e-procurement website **kppp.karnataka.gov.in** They may take assistance from e-procurement help desk at +91-8046010000/ +91-8068948777 Last date for submission of Bids is: **16.03.2026. up to 5.00 P.M.** For clarifications please Contact 080- 22235176.

Empanelment No.TD/2025-26/PREQUAL_TENDER_NUMBER_3

Sd/-
For Commissioner for Transport Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/5787/MAA/2025-26

CHAMUNDESHWARI ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Corporate Office, Project Suction, CESC, Mysuru-570017.
Ph: 9448499920, Email ID:gmproj@cescmysore.org Website: www.cescmysore.org

CESC/GM (Proj)/33KV Station/Tender-2025-26/ 37598 Date: 20.02.2026

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION
(THROUGH KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)

Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited, invites Bids on electronic mode for the following works against following enquiry numbers on **Turnkey basis.**

Enquiry No./ Name of the work
1) CESC/GM (Proj)/33KV Station/Tender-2025-26/273 Dtd 19.02.2026
Establishing 2x5 MVA, 33/11kV GIS sub-station at **K.Peraje** Village in Madikeri Taluk, Kodagu District along with construction of **33kV** line.
2) CESC/GM (Proj)/33KV Station/Tender-2025-26/274 Dtd 19.02.2026
Establishing 2x5 MVA, 33/11kV GIS sub-station at **Sampaje** Village in Madikeri Taluk, Kodagu District along with construction of **33kV** line.

The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The details regarding participation in the e-tendering process can be obtained through e-procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **20.02.2026 @ 17:00hrs.**

For clarification contact help desk +91-8046010000, +91-8068948777 or e-mail address support@eprochelpdesk.com

Last date & time for receipt of Bids is **06.03.2026 @ 17:00hrs. If due date for Bid submission is extended, it will be intimated in the Karnataka Public Procurement portal**. Any details required in this regard can also be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

All Corrigendum/Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the Bids.

DIPR/MYSORE/1711/SSC/2025-26 **Sd/- General Manager (Project), Corporate Office, CESC, Mysuru**

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ವಿಭಾಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ.

ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂ: ಐಎಫ್‌ಟಿ–41/ಎಇ–1/2025–26/3551 ದಿನಾಂಕ:–20.02.2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅವಧಿ ವಿಸ್ತರಣೆ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ವಿಷಯ : ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅವಧಿ ವಿಸ್ತರಣೆ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಮಾಡುವ ಬಗ್ಗೆ.
ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ: ಕಚೇರಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : ಕಾಅ/ದಾವಿದಾ/ಐ.ಎಫ್.ಟಿ–41/ಎಇ–1/2025–26/ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 05.02.2026.

ಈ ಕಚೇರಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಐಎಫ್‌ಟಿ–41/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ 05.02.2026ರ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿನ ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ.4 ಮತ್ತು ರ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳನ್ನು ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಕಾರಣಗಳಿಂದ ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನಂತೆ ಮುಂದೂಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಈ ಕಛೇರಿಯ ಕೆಲಸದ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ (ದೂರವಾಣಿ : 08192 234951, 231530) ಅಥವಾ ವೆಬ್ ಸೈಟ್ https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

	ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ 4ರ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ	ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ 6ರ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ
ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ವಿಚಾರಿಸಲು/ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ	21.02.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ	26.02.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ
ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ :	02.03.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ	05.03.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ
ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ :	03.03.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 4.30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ	06.03.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 4.30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ

ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಸದರಿ ಕಛೇರಿಯ ಕೆಲಸದ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ (ದೂರವಾಣಿ : 08192 234951, 231530) ಅಥವಾ ವೆಬ್ ಸೈಟ್ https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

ವಾಸಾಇ/ಡಿವಿಜಿ/763/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26
ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ ವಿಭಾಗ ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ

ಪುರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ದೇವನಹಳ್ಳಿ
ದೇವನಹಳ್ಳಿ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ–562110, ದೂ: 080–27682221,
E-Mail: itstaff_ulb_devanahalli@yahoo.co.in Web:- www.devanahallitown.mrc.gov.in

ನಂ.ದೇಪು/ತಾ.ಶಾ/ಟೆ.ಪ್ರ/ಸಿಆರ್/01/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 20.02.2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
(ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್ (ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ. ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್) ಮೂಲಕ ಮಾತ್ರ)
(ಸ್ಟಾಂಡರ್ಡ್‌ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್ KW 1&2 ರ ನಿಬಂಧನೆಗಳಂತೆ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ)

ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ವಿಷಯ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ, ದೇವನಹಳ್ಳಿ ಪುರಸಭಾ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ 2025–26 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಪುರಸಭಾ ಅನುದಾನದಡಿ ಪೈಪ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ, ಪೇವರ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಡಾಂಬರ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಚರಂಡಿ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ, ಶೆಡ್ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ, ಕರ್ಬ್ ಸ್ಟೋನ್ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ, ಸಿ.ಸಿ. ಟಿ.ವಿ ಕ್ಯಾಮರಾ ಅಳವಡಿಸುವುದು, ಕೊಳವೆ ಬಾವಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಪಂಪು ಮೋಟಾರ್ ಮತ್ತು ಅವಶ್ಯಕ ಸಾಮಾಗ್ರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಅಳವಡಿಸುವ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ, ಬಾಡಿಗೆ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ವಾಹನ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡುವುದು ಮತ್ತು ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಒಟ್ಟು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ : 279.31 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳ ಒಟ್ಟು 24 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯನ್ನು ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್‌ನ ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಏಕ ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಂದಾಯಿಸಲ್ಪಟ್ಟ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು.

ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: (As per KPPP Portal ಘಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: (As per KPPP Portal) ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಪುರಸಭೆಯ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಶಾಖೆಯನ್ನು ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/–
ಆಡಳಿತಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು
ಪುರಸಭೆ, ದೇವನಹಳ್ಳಿ

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಾ.ಪ್ರ/5785/ಎಸ್‌ಎಸ್‌ಸಿ/2025–26

ಸಹಿ/–
ಮುಖ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿ
ಪುರಸಭೆ, ದೇವನಹಳ್ಳಿ

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA FOREST DEPARTMENT
Deputy Director, Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo / Assistant Conservator of forest office, Chitradurga Sub Division, , Chitradurga, VP Extension, JCR Road, Chitradurga-577 501
Office E-mail ID:**acf.cta@gmail.com** Office Pho: **08194–230402**

No:DD/AMZ/e-tender/OST/2025-26Date:16-02-2026

Short term e-Tender

It is hereby notified for the general information of the public that, the Deputy Director & Assistant Conservator of Forests Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo, Chitradurga, a unit of Zoo Authority of Karnataka herein after referred to Tender Inviting Authority, has invited e-Tender for Outsourcing the staff for a period of one year from the date of agreement. For details of tender conditions and for online submission of tender log on to E-procurement portal of Karnataka Government https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in and select the Department: Zoo Authority of Karnataka. Tender Cost Rs.68.90lakshs

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:- Last date and time for Uploading bid documents in e-procurement portal (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) up to 4.30 P.M 26.02.2026 up to 4.30 P.M

Last date and time for opening technical bid in the Office of the Executive Director, Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo, Chitradurga & Deputy Conservator of Forests Chitradurga division, Chitradurga. 28.02.2026 at 11.30 AM

Last date and time for opening financial bid in the Office of the Executive Director, Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo, Chitradurga & Deputy Conservator of Forests Chitradurga division, Chitradurga. 28.02.2026 at 11.31 AM

RO.No.686:DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/2025-26
Sd/-Deputy Director, Adumalleshwara Mini Zoo / Assistant Conservator of forest office, Chitradurga Sub Division.

QUICK READ

BJP workers are among people: Nitin Nabinw

Ahmedabad

Taking a swipe at the opposition, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President Nitin Nabin on Friday said party workers remain constantly among the people and remarked that there are part-time politicians who appear only during elections. Nabin is on a three-day visit to Gujarat after assuming office as the BJP National President. Speaking at a felicitation programme organised at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, Nabin said, BJP workers are constantly among the people, whereas some parties have part-time politicians who appear only during elections. He urged party workers to remain continuously engaged with citizens and to treat public service as their primary responsibility.

Kerala Cabinet clears IT policy aiming for 5 lakh jobs

Thiruvananthapuram

The Kerala Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, on Friday approved the state's Information Technology Policy 2026, laying out an ambitious roadmap to position Kerala as a leading knowledge and innovation hub in India over the next five years. At the centre of the policy is a target to secure at least 10 per cent of India's total IT export share and generate a minimum of five lakh new jobs across the IT sector and allied industries, according to official sources. The government also aims to significantly expand IT infrastructure capacity, with a focus on tripling existing capacity through private sector participation and decentralised growth across emerging urban and semi-urban centres.

Govt likely to discontinue cash payments at NH

New Delhi

The government on Friday said that the NHAI is contemplating to completely discontinue cash transactions at the National Highway fee plazas across the country from April 1, 2026. The move will develop a fully digital National Highway tolling ecosystem. Post implementation, all toll payments at National Highway fee plazas will be processed exclusively through digital modes using FASTag or Unified Payments Interface (UPI). According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the proposed measure is aimed at consolidating the gains achieved in Electronic Toll Collection and strengthening the efficiency and reliability of National Highway fee plaza operations.

HARYANA REPLACES RED TAPE WITH RED CARPET

Governor highlights reforms, exports growth in Budget session address at Chandigarh.

CHANDIGARH

Haryana Governor Ashim Kumar Ghosh on Friday said the state government has replaced red tape with a welcoming red carpet approach to transform Haryana into one of India's most trusted investment destinations. He made these remarks during his customary address on the opening day of the Budget session of the state Assembly in the capital.

Dressed in traditional West Bengal attire, Governor Ghosh began his speech by invoking Vande Mataram, calling it the call of India's soul. He said the spirit of Vande Mataram is deeply ingrained in the country's culture and reflected in its folk traditions.

Highlighting the state's reform-driven governance model, the Governor said policy clarity, strong infrastructure and business-friendly initiatives have significantly boosted investor confidence. He noted that Haryana secured the prestigious 'Top Achiever' status in the Business Reforms Action Plan rankings released by the Government of India in November last year. The state achieved an impressive score of 99.50 per cent by implementing 400 challenging reforms.

He emphasized that Haryana is now firmly positioned as a preferred hub for both global and domestic investors. With its investor-friendly policies, Haryana is gradually emerging as a trusted investment destination. The state's strategic location, strong infrastructure and public policy clarity have strengthened investor confidence. By adopting ease-of-doing business as a core work culture, the government has succeeded in attracting new investments and generating more employment opportunities, he said. Governor Ghosh added that in the evolving global economic landscape, Haryana is emerging as a key destination for investors. He pointed out that as global supply chains continue to shift, the National Capital Region (NCR) area of the state is developing into a major logistics hub, further enhancing its economic prospects. Citing export performance, the Governor said that in 2023-24, Haryana's total exports reached a historic high of Rs 2.75 lakh crore. He further stated that in 2024-25, merchandise exports from the state touched Rs 1,61,707 crore.

Special operation targets organised fraud network in North Chotanagpur region.

Jharkhand Police Arrest 57 In Cybercrime Crackdown

RANCHI

In a major crackdown on cybercrime, Jharkhand Police arrested 57 accused during a special operation conducted across the North Chotanagpur region, officials said on Friday. The coordinated action was carried out on the directions of Inspector General Sunil Bhaskar, with simultaneous raids in multiple districts.

The operation primarily targeted suspicious mobile numbers flagged through the police department's Pratibimba app, a technical tool used to track and verify numbers linked to cyber fraud activities. Authorities said that between October 1, 2025, and February 16, 2026, a total of 15 cybercrime cases were registered following verification and investigation of these flagged numbers.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the arrested individuals were allegedly involved in a range of fraudulent activities. These included making phone calls while impersonating government officials, banking representatives or law enforcement personnel, as well as committing ATM-related fraud, OTP-based scams and online transaction fraud.

Police officials indicated that several of the accused were part of an organised cyber fraud network operating across different districts of the region.

During the extensive raids, law enforcement agencies recovered a large quantity of electronic devices, banking instruments and incriminating documents. The seized items included 132 mobile phones, 168 SIM cards, 31 ATM cards, seven bank passbooks and three bank cheque books. Additionally, 23 registers and notebooks containing transaction records were confiscated, along with WhatsApp chat data allegedly used to coordinate fraudulent activities.

Police also recovered Rs 4.67 lakh in cash from the accused during the operation. Investigators found that some members of the network had opened and operated bank accounts and procured SIM cards using forged documents or identity papers belonging to other individuals.

Among the recovered identity documents were three Aadhaar cards, eight PAN cards, one labour card, one voter ID card and one driving licence.

Congress opened borders for Bangladeshis: HM Amit Shah

GUWAHATI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a scathing attack on the Congress, alleging that they opened the borders to facilitate the influx of Bangladeshi nationals into India during their years in power. Addressing a gathering at Nathanpur area of Assam's Cachar district, Shah asserted that every illegal Bangladeshi who entered the country under Congress rule would be identified and deported.

The Congress government allowed unchecked infiltration by opening the borders for Bangladeshis. I want to assure the people of Assam that those who entered the country illegally during Congress rule will be sent back, Shah said, drawing loud applause from the crowd.

He accused the opposition party of compromising national security for vote-bank politics and ignoring the concerns of border states like Assam.

The Home Minister said the BJP-led government at the Centre is committed to protecting India's borders and safeguarding the cultural and demographic identity of the northeastern states.

He added that strict measures have already been put in place to strengthen border management and curb illegal migration. During his visit, Shah also inaugurated the second phase of the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP-2) at Nathanpur in the Cachar district, located along the India-Bangladesh border. The programme aims to accelerate the development of border villages by providing infrastructure, connectivity, livelihood opportunities and access to essential services, thereby improving the quality of life of residents and discouraging migration.

Shah said the Vibrant Villages Programme reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of transforming India's border villages into thriving centres of development.

NIA approaches Calcutta HC, accuses Bengal Police of non-cooperation

KOLKATA

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday approached the Calcutta High Court seeking its intervention in directing the West Bengal Police to submit the case diary of last month's violence at Beldanga in minority-dominated Murshidabad district to the central agency officials probing the matter.

In its petition, the NIA counsel had argued that the state police was refusing to hand over the case diary in the matter despite the Supreme Court's Division Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi last month, refusing to entertain the plea of the state government opposing the NIA probe in the matter.

The Calcutta High Court had admitted the petition, and the matter is likely to come up for hearing on February 24.

To recall, violence broke out at Beldanga last month over a rumour of the murder of a local migrant worker from the area in neighbouring Jharkhand, which the Jharkhand Police totally dismissed and termed the death of the migrant worker as suicide.

Thereafter, the Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly filed a petition at the Calcutta High Court seeking an NIA probe into the matter.

After the Calcutta High Court gave freedom to the Union Home Ministry to take a decision in the matter, the ministry gave a go-ahead to the NIA, and central agency officials started the investigation.

India, Brazil Deepen Agricultural Cooperation Dialogue

Ministers discuss future collaboration at Krishi Bhawan meeting Friday.

NEW DELHI

India's Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday held detailed discussions with Brazil's Agriculture and Livestock Minister Carlos Favaro and Minister of Agrarian Development and Family Agriculture Luiz Paulo Teixeira Ferreira at Krishi Bhawan in New Delhi. The meeting focused on reviewing the status of ongoing bilateral cooperation and identifying new avenues for partnership in agriculture and allied sectors.

During the talks, Minister Chouhan underscored the deep-rooted and friendly ties between India and Brazil, anchored in shared democratic values and strengthened through regular high-level engagements. He referred to the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Brazil during the 2025 BRICS Summit, describing it as a significant milestone in reinforcing bilateral cooperation across sectors, including agriculture.

Chouhan also appreciated Brazil's participation in the India AI Impact Summit, terming it an important step towards enhancing technological collaboration. He emphasized that emerging technologies, digital agriculture, and innovation-driven farming practices offer immense scope for mutual benefit. Luiz Paulo Teixeira Ferreira highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation in agriculture and allied activities, noting that there are several promising areas where both countries can collaborate. He suggested that these areas could be taken up for more detailed discussions in the near future to translate intent into concrete action. Carlos Favaro lauded India's advancements and innovations in bio-inputs, pointing out that sustainable agricultural practices and eco-friendly inputs present a vital area for future cooperation. He noted that knowledge exchange and joint initiatives in this field could yield significant gains for farmers in both countries. The two sides reviewed ongoing collaborations and explored potential new partnerships, agreeing to further deepen cooperation in research, trade, sustainable agriculture, and rural development. Minister Chouhan extended an invitation to his Brazilian counterparts to participate in the forthcoming BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting.

The Brazilian delegation included senior officials such as Wilson Gambogi Pingeiro Taques, Chief of Cabinet; Roberto Carlos Papa, Agricultural Attache at the Embassy of Brazil; Luiz Renato de Alcantara Rua, Secretary at the Secretariat of Commerce and International Relations (MAPA); and Mauricio Polidoro, International Advisor.

DPO arrested for taking Rs 50,000 bribe in Kishanganj

PATNA

The Special Vigilance Unit (SVU) of Bihar has carried out another major action against corruption in the state. On Friday, SVU officials arrested Anita Kumari, District Program Officer (DPO–ICDS) posted in Thakurganj block of Kishanganj, red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 50,000.

According to officials, the accused officer had allegedly demanded a large sum of money by threatening disciplinary action. The complainant, Nagendra Kumar, son of Rajdev Sah and a resident of Jagdishpur Tiyari under Noorsarai police station area in Nalanda, lodged a written complaint at the SVU office in Patna.

Based on the complaint, the vigilance team verified the allegations and laid a trap. During the operation, Anita Kumari was caught red-handed while accepting Rs 50,000 as bribe money. The complainant alleged that the DPO had threatened to suspend him by preparing a charge sheet and demanded a bribe of Rs 10 lakh to avoid the action.

After negotiation, the deal was allegedly fixed at Rs 50,000, at which point the SVU team moved in and arrested the officer. The SVU has registered Case No. 08/2026 under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The arrested officer will be produced before the Vigilance Court in Patna on Saturday. Further legal proceedings in the case are currently underway. The SVU took decisive action against corruption by arresting Junior Engineer Aman Kumar, posted in Sahibganj under Muzaffarpur district, while he was allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 9,000.

As per the pre-planned operation, the complainant handed over Rs 9,000 as the first instalment of the demanded bribe to the accused engineer.

WIDOWS DAUGHTERS EDUCATION

Himachal Expands Education Aid For Widows' Daughters

SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh government on Friday announced the expansion of the Indira Gandhi Sukh Shiksha Yojna, extending financial assistance to daughters of widows pursuing higher education both within and outside the state. The move aims to strengthen educational access and reduce financial burdens for vulnerable families.

The scheme, designed to provide comprehensive support in education, health and nutrition to children of widows, destitute or divorced women and disabled parents, has been amended to benefit eligible daughters up to 27 years of age for higher education. Earlier, the financial assistance was largely focused on children up to 18 years of age.

Under the revised provisions, beneficiaries enrolled in professional courses at government-run institutions outside Himachal Pradesh will be eligible to receive financial assistance of Rs 3,000 per month for up to 10 months. This support is intended to cover rent or paying guest accommodation expenses in situations where government hostel facilities are unavailable.

The expanded scheme covers a wide range of professional courses, including engineering and technology, business and management, medical and allied health sciences, law, computer applications and IT certifications, education and humanities programmes under the State Council for Vocational Training (SCVT), and courses offered by the Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology.

At present, the scheme provides monthly financial assistance to children of eligible women and disabled parents up to the age of 18. It also covers tuition fees, hostel charges and other related educational expenses for students enrolled in government institutions within the state.

ED attaches land worth ₹5.13 crore in money laundering probe

INDORE

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Indore Sub-Zonal Office, has provisionally attached an immovable property a parcel of land valued at ₹5.13 crore in the name of Neeta Shahra, wife of Umesh Shahra, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The attachment order was issued on February 17, 2026, the investigation agency said in a press statement. The action forms part of an ongoing investigation into M/s Ruchi Global Ltd. (now renamed M/s Agrotrade Enterprises Ltd.), a company promoted by the late Kailash Chandra Shahra and Umesh Shahra. The ED probe stems from a First Information Report (FIR) registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), AC-IV, Vyapam, Bhopal, against the company and its associates under Sections 13(2) and 13(1)(d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and Section 120-B read with Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, it said.

QUICK READ

43 newly-elected MPs face murder charges

Dhaka

As many as 43 Members of Parliament (MPs) elected in the 13th National Parliamentary Election held in Bangladesh last week face murder charges under Section 302, the local media reported citing data released by a leading civic organisation of the country. According to Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik, also known as Shujan, 42 MPs faced such cases previously and 12 have both past and present cases, Bangladesh's 'Daily Star' reported on Friday. It mentioned that among major parties, MPs from Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) - which registered a massive win in the elections - have the highest share of current cases at 50.24 per cent. Radical Jamaat-e-Islami, the second-largest party, follows BNP at the second position at 47.07 per cent.

North Korea opens rare party congress with leader Kim

Seoul

North Korea has kicked off a rare party congress, state media said Friday, as leader Kim Jong-un touted economic achievements at the country's biggest political event in five years that would set major policy directions on defence and the economy. The Ninth Congress of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) opened with splendor in Pyongyang, the capital city of the revolution, the previous day, news agency reported quoting Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Typically running several days, the congress sets state policy goals for the next five years on the economy, defence and diplomacy, and makes major personnel decisions.

TRUMP SETS DEADLINE AMID RISING IRAN TENSIONS

President Trump demands nuclear deal within days, warns Iran of consequences

WASHINGTON

Amid escalating tensions in the Middle East, U.S. President Donald Trump issued a stark warning to Iran, insisting that Tehran must reach a deal over its nuclear program within 10 to 15 days or face severe consequences. The remarks come as the United States continues a significant military buildup in the region, raising fears of a broader conflict.

Speaking during the inaugural meeting of his Board of Peace in Washington, Trump said negotiations aimed at ending the prolonged standoff with Iran were progressing positively. However, he stressed that any agreement must be meaningful and address key concerns surrounding Iran's nuclear ambitions. Otherwise bad things happen, Trump cautioned, reiterating his administration's readiness to act if diplomacy fails.

The President referenced U.S. airstrikes carried out in June, asserting that Iran's nuclear capabilities had been decimated. He added that while the recent military actions had significantly weakened Tehran's potential, further steps could still be taken if necessary. We may have to take it a step further or we may not, he said, leaving open the possibility of additional military measures.

Pressed for a clearer timeline, Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that Iran would likely have a maximum of 10 to 15 days to respond. You'll be finding out over the next probably 10 days, he said, suggesting that the deadline would provide sufficient time for Iranian authorities to finalize their position.

Iran, in response to Washington's warnings, threatened retaliation against U.S. military bases in the region if attacked. The exchange of threats has intensified concerns among international observers that miscalculation or provocation could trigger a wider confrontation.

While Trump declined to elaborate on specific consequences, he repeated that Iran would have to make a deal one way or another. Diplomatic channels remain open, but with a firm deadline now set, the coming days are expected to be critical in determining whether negotiations can avert further escalation.

Iran warns of 'decisive' response if subjected to military aggression

UNITED NATIONS

Iran will respond decisively and proportionately to any military aggression, exercising its right to self-defence under the UN Charter, its UN ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani said in a letter to the secretary-general and the president of the Security Council. Citing US President Donald Trump's recent remarks on Diego Garcia, Iravani wrote: In such circumstances, all bases, facilities, and assets of the hostile force in the region would constitute legitimate targets in the context of Iran's defensive response. The United States would bear full and direct responsibility for any unpredictable and uncontrolled consequences.

Former president defends martial law decree despite court conviction and backlash

YOON APOLOGISES AFTER LIFE SENTENCE VERDICT

SEOUL

Former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Friday issued a public apology following his life sentence for masterminding what the court described as an insurrection tied to his brief declaration of martial law in December 2024. The statement, released through his legal team, came a day after the Seoul Central District Court handed down the landmark ruling.

Yoon acknowledged the frustration and hardship caused to citizens by his decision to impose martial law but maintained that his actions were driven by what he called sincere intentions to protect the nation. While expressing regret for the turmoil, he stood firmly behind what he described as the purpose and necessity of the decree.

The court found that Yoon had orchestrated an unconstitutional attempt to undermine democratic order, leading to widespread political unrest and legal proceedings that culminated in Thursday's verdict. However, Yoon dismissed the ruling as politically motivated, calling it predetermined and accusing his opponents of using the judiciary to retaliate against him.

Forces that seek to smear a decision made to save the nation as an 'insurrection' and to use it beyond political attacks as an opportunity to purge and eliminate their opponents will only grow more rampant going forward, Yoon said in the statement. He argued that the case against him was not merely a legal matter but part of a broader political campaign to discredit and silence him.

The former president also cast doubt on the fairness of any potential appeal, questioning whether judicial independence could be guaranteed in what he described as a compromised legal environment. Despite his conviction, Yoon urged his supporters to remain united and resilient, calling on them to unite and rise in the face of what he framed as injustice.

The case marks one of the most dramatic chapters in South Korea's recent political history, underscoring deep divisions within the country and raising broader questions about accountability, governance, and the resilience of democratic institutions.

PM Sanae Takaichi Warns of Chinese Coercion Threat

TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Friday warned of increasing Chinese coercion in her first post-election address to parliament, pledging sweeping reforms to Japan's defence strategy and national security framework. Fresh from a commanding lower house election victory that solidified her coalition's power, Takaichi outlined a robust agenda aimed at countering what she described as mounting economic and military pressure from China and its regional partners.

Takaichi's four-month tenure has already been marked by heightened diplomatic tensions with Beijing. The dispute escalated after she stated that Japan could use military force to respond to any attack on Taiwan that also posed a threat to Japanese territory. Her remarks drew sharp criticism from China and underscored Tokyo's growing concerns over regional stability.

Addressing lawmakers, Takaichi said Japan faces its most challenging security environment since World War Two. She cited China's expanding military operations in the region, its deepening security ties with Russia, and North Korea's advancing nuclear missile capabilities as key threats requiring urgent attention. According to the Prime Minister, these developments demand a comprehensive reassessment of Japan's defence posture.

Prime Minister vows defence overhaul after landslide election victory in parliament

With her ruling coalition now controlling more than two-thirds of seats in the lower house, Takaichi enjoys strong legislative backing and faces limited political resistance in pushing forward her agenda. She announced that the government would revise Japan's three core security documents later this year, laying the foundation for a new defence strategy designed to strengthen deterrence and preparedness.

In addition, Takaichi said Japan would accelerate a review of its military export regulations. Easing restrictions on defence exports, she argued, would allow Japanese firms to expand overseas sales, bolster domestic defence industries, and enhance supply chain resilience for critical materials and technologies.

The Prime Minister also emphasized the need to reinforce strategic supply chains to reduce economic vulnerabilities and safeguard national interests. As regional tensions continue to rise, Takaichi signaled that Japan is prepared to adopt a more assertive security policy to protect its sovereignty and contribute to regional stability.

Duterte to Skip ICC Pre-Trial Hearings

MALINA

Former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte will not attend pre-trial hearings next week in his alleged crimes against humanity case at the International Criminal Court (ICC), the court announced on Friday. Judges approved a request from his defence team to waive his right to be present, though they described the reasons cited for his absence as speculative.

Duterte's lawyers had argued that the 80-year-old former leader is experiencing cognitive decline that would make it difficult for him to participate effectively in the proceedings. However, judges at the Hague-based court previously ruled that Duterte was fit to stand trial. Independent medical experts had concluded that he was capable of understanding the charges against him and could meaningfully engage in his defence.

Despite those findings, the court agreed to allow Duterte to remain absent from the upcoming pre-trial hearings, marking a significant procedural development in the high-profile case. The decision underscores the balance the ICC seeks to maintain between safeguarding defendants' rights and ensuring the judicial process moves forward efficiently.

Duterte, who served as president of the Philippines from 2016 to 2022, was arrested last March and transferred to The Hague to face charges linked to his controversial anti-drug campaign. According to ICC prosecutors, he allegedly created, funded, and armed so-called death squads during his administration's war on drugs. Thousands of suspected narcotics dealers and users were killed in operations that drew widespread international condemnation.

Prosecutors contend that the campaign amounted to crimes against humanity, citing systematic and widespread killings. Duterte has consistently denied wrongdoing, maintaining that he instructed police to use lethal force only in self-defence. He has repeatedly defended his anti-drug crackdown as necessary to combat criminality and protect public safety. The upcoming hearings are expected to address procedural matters and outline the next stages of the case. As proceedings continue, the trial is likely to draw significant global attention, given Duterte's polarizing legacy and the broader implications for international accountability.

Europe's Top Five Plan Joint Drone Push

PARIS

Europe's five largest military powers—France, Germany, Italy, Poland and United Kingdom—plan to jointly invest in autonomous military drones, reflecting lessons from Russia's war in Ukraine and concerns over the United States' long-term commitment to NATO.

A draft document, discussed at a meeting in Krakow, outlines cooperation in developing interceptor and surveillance drones that offer a cheaper alternative to costly air-defence missiles. Ukrainian battlefield experience has shown how low-cost unmanned systems can counter advanced weapons and strengthen air protection. The proposal also calls for a major expansion of Europe's defence industrial base, faster research in advanced technologies and higher production capacity.

Ministers are expected to back European Union measures allowing greater fiscal flexibility for defence spending and new lending tools to support large investments. As geopolitical uncertainty grows, the initiative signals a push for stronger strategic autonomy and reduced reliance on external security.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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1	5	6	2	9	4	7	8	3
7	8	9	1	5	3	4	6	2
4	3	2	7	6	8	9	1	5
6	9	3	4	2	5	8	7	1
2	4	8	3	1	7	5	9	6
5	7	1	6	8	9	3	2	4

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

Venezuela Passes Limited Amnesty Law Amid Rights Group Criticism

VENEZUELA

Venezuela's ruling party-controlled legislature passed a limited amnesty bill aimed at releasing a number of prisoners arrested for political reasons, but human rights organisations and opposition figures argue it fails to deliver broad relief for hundreds still detained.

The amnesty law, approved after a second debate in the National Assembly chaired by Jorge Rodríguez and signed by interim President Delcy Rodríguez, provides amnesty for individuals involved in political protests and violent actions over a series of years — from the brief 2002 coup attempt to demonstrations and elections in multiple years up to 2025. However, some major categories are excluded: those convicted of military rebellion, serious crimes such as murder or corruption, and individuals accused of promoting armed actions against the Venezuelan state are not eligible.

Rights groups, including Foro Penal, welcomed the gesture cautiously but criticised the law's limitations, saying it leaves many political prisoners behind and lacks clarity on eligible offences. They also note that the law does not restore revoked political rights or lift sanctions against media outlets, while requiring applicants who are abroad to appear in person in Venezuela to complete the process, a significant hurdle for exiled activists.

The law's passage comes amid Venezuela's broader political shift after the U.S. government's intervention in January, which led to the capture of former president Nicolás Maduro and a push toward normalising relations between Caracas and Washington. In that context, Delcy Rodríguez has already released hundreds of detainees that rights groups consider political prisoners, though the government continues to deny that politically motivated detentions occurred, insisting those jailed committed criminal offences.

Families of prisoners and advocacy groups have staged protests and hunger strikes to press for more extensive releases, highlighting deep frustration with the law's restrictions and pace of implementation. Estimates suggest that hundreds more remain in detention, and critics argue that true reconciliation will require more comprehensive legal reform and respect for human rights.

DONBAS WAR DISPLACEMENT

Displaced Ukrainians Fear No End to War

KYIV

Sixty-five-year-old Halyna Popriadukhina has fled her home three times as Russian forces advanced deeper into eastern Ukraine during nearly four years of relentless war. Now exhausted and uncertain of the future, she says she no longer knows where she could run if the fighting reaches her again.

I'm afraid there's nowhere else to escape, Popriadukhina said, her voice heavy with fatigue and grief. One of her sons is missing in action, while another is believed to be held by Russian forces. Her personal tragedy reflects the broader humanitarian crisis unfolding across Ukraine as the conflict grinds into its fifth year next week.

Nearly four million people remain displaced within Ukraine, according to official estimates, while more than five million others have sought refuge across Europe. Many fear they may never return to their homes or reunite with loved ones separated by the war. Entire communities have been uprooted, with towns reduced to rubble and families scattered across borders.

At the center of ongoing U.S.-backed peace talks lies the fate of Donbas, Ukraine's heavily industrialized eastern region comprising Donetsk and Luhansk. Control of this territory has become a decisive issue in negotiations aimed at ending Europe's largest conflict since World War Two.

Russia is demanding that Kyiv cede the remaining 20 percent of Donetsk province that Moscow has not yet been able to capture militarily. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has firmly rejected the proposal, despite acknowledging that U.S. mediators suggested privately that such a concession might be sufficient to secure peace.

For displaced civilians like Popriadukhina, diplomatic negotiations offer a glimmer of hope, yet also deepen anxiety about what compromises might mean for their homeland. As world powers debate borders and security guarantees, millions of Ukrainians continue to endure uncertainty, loss, and the daily fear that the war may claim even more of what they hold dear.

Love All, Serve All: The Spiritual Evolution of a Healed Consciousness

PRADIVYA NAMBIAR

Humanity often speaks of love as a virtue and service as a moral responsibility. Yet very rarely do we ask a deeper question: From where does our love arise?

Is it born from wholeness — or from unhealed wounds?
When consciousness is cluttered with unresolved pain, love becomes conditional. Service becomes transactional. Kindness depends on how we are treated. We love those who affirm us, we serve those who reciprocate, and we withdraw when we feel threatened. What we call love is often a subtle negotiation rooted in fear, insecurity, or survival.

The journey of inner cleansing changes this entirely.
As awareness deepens, we begin to recognise that much of our emotional reactivity was shaped long before the present moment. The anger we carried was once fear. The jealousy was once insecurity. The need for control was once an attempt to feel safe. These patterns were not flaws — they were protection mechanisms formed in childhood, reinforced by experience, and stored in the subconscious.

But when we courageously examine these patterns, something transformative occurs. Judgment softens. We begin to see that just as we acted from conditioning, so does everyone else. The one who hurt us may be living from inherited pain. The one who disappoints us may be shaped by invisible struggles. The one who triggers us may be reflecting something within us that is still asking to be healed.

Cleansing consciousness dissolves the illusion of separation.
This is where the principle "Love All, Serve All" finds its true meaning. It is not a slogan of passive goodness, nor a call to self-sacrifice. It is the natural expression of a healed mind.

When wounds are unexamined, love is selective. When fear dominates, service feels exhausting. When identity is rigid, humanity appears divided. But as the ego softens and subconscious conditioning loosens its grip, love becomes less about possession and more about presence. Service becomes less about obligation and more about contribution.

To love all does not mean tolerating harm. To serve all does not mean abandoning boundaries. Rather, it means acting from wholeness instead of woundedness. It means responding consciously rather than reacting unconsciously. It means seeing beyond surface behaviour and recognising the shared human struggle beneath it.

At its deepest level, "Love All, Serve All" is a statement of unity.
Humanity does not fracture because of difference; it fractures because of unconsciousness. Every conflict, whether personal or global, begins in the unhealed mind. Every prejudice grows from inherited fear. Every division is sustained by unresolved pain projected outward.

When one individual heals, it is not an isolated event. It subtly shifts the collective field. A person who chooses compassion over reaction reduces division in their immediate world. A person who serves without ego weakens the culture of competition. A person who loves without agenda strengthens the fabric of humanity.

Spiritual evolution, therefore, is not withdrawal from society. It is participation in society with clarity and compassion. It is the decision to cleanse one's own consciousness before attempting to change the world.

In that inner purification, love ceases to be an effort. It becomes a natural state. Service ceases to drain energy. It becomes a joyful expression. Peace ceases to be an ideal. It becomes a foundation.

To love all and serve all is not about being saintly. It is about being conscious. It is about recognising that beneath culture, personality, belief, and history, the same life force moves through every human being.

And when that truth is realised — not intellectually, but experientially — love stops being selective. Service stops being conditional. Humanity begins to feel unified.

The highest spiritual journey may not be escape from the world, but active participation in it — with awareness, humility, and an open heart.

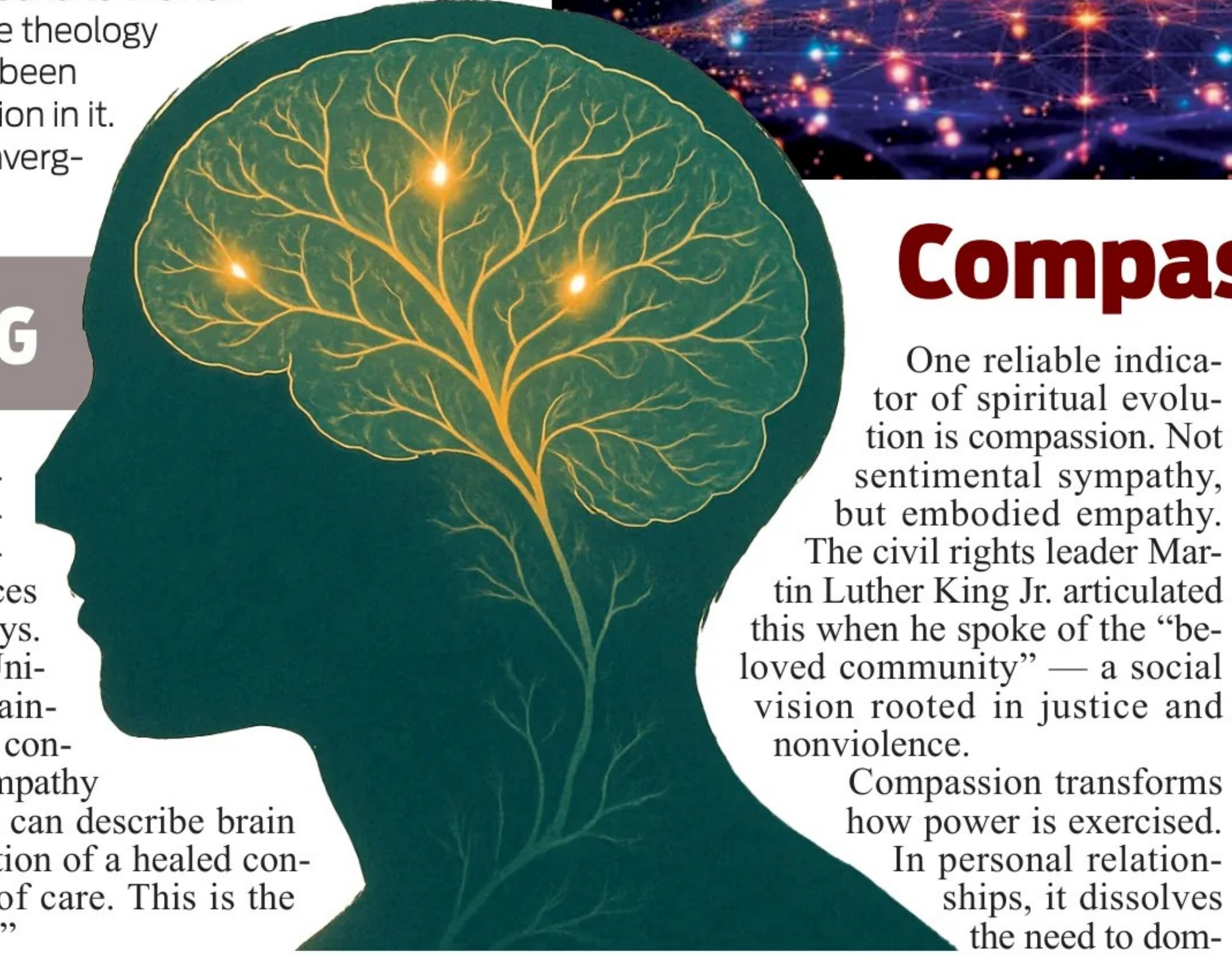
THE SPIRITUAL Evolution of a Healed Consciousness

In an age defined by speed, spectacle and fragmentation, the idea of healing has expanded beyond the physical body. Increasingly, individuals and communities are exploring what it means to heal consciousness itself — to repair the fractures of trauma, disconnection and inherited belief systems. The spiritual evolution of a healed consciousness is not about perfection. It is about integration. It is about becoming whole. Across cultures and centuries, spiritual traditions have described awakening as a return to unity — unity within oneself and with the wider web of life. From the teachings of Gautama Buddha to the non-violent philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, and the contemplative theology of Thomas Merton, the journey toward healed awareness has been framed not as escape from the world but as deeper participation in it. Today, neuroscience, psychology and spiritual practice are converging in ways that illuminate how such evolution unfolds.

From Fragmentation to Integration

A healed consciousness often begins in rupture. Trauma — whether personal, collective or generational — fractures the psyche. Psychologist Carl Jung described individuation as the lifelong process of integrating the shadow — the hidden, denied aspects of the self — into a coherent whole. Without integration, we project our unexamined wounds onto others. With integration, we reclaim responsibility for our inner life. Modern trauma research echoes this insight. Though healing modalities vary, many converge on a simple truth: the nervous system must feel safe before the mind can expand. Practices such as meditation, breathwork and contemplative prayer regulate the body, allowing individuals to move beyond survival responses and into reflection. The late spiritual teacher Thich Nhat Hanh frequently reminded his students that "peace in oneself, peace in the world" is not a slogan but a neurological reality. When the inner storm quiets, perception shifts. Reaction softens into response. Separation yields to connection.

THE SCIENCE OF AWAKENING



While spirituality has ancient roots, its contemporary exploration is increasingly informed by science. Neuroplasticity — the brain's ability to rewire itself — has provided biological evidence that consciousness is not fixed. Repeated practices of gratitude, compassion and mindfulness reshape neural pathways.

Institutions such as Johns Hopkins University and Stanford University have conducted research into meditation, compassion training and altered states of awareness. Their findings suggest that consistent contemplative practice enhances emotional regulation, empathy and resilience. Yet science alone cannot define healing. Data can describe brain states, but it cannot fully capture meaning. The spiritual evolution of a healed consciousness includes ethical maturation — a widening circle of care. This is the movement from "How do I survive?" to "How do we flourish?"

Compassion as Evolutionary Marker

One reliable indicator of spiritual evolution is compassion. Not sentimental sympathy, but embodied empathy. The civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. articulated this when he spoke of the "beloved community" — a social vision rooted in justice and nonviolence.

Compassion transforms how power is exercised. In personal relationships, it dissolves the need to dominate. In leadership, it fosters service over control. In economics, it challenges systems that prioritize profit over human dignity.

Research in positive psychology supports what contemplative traditions have long known: acts of generosity increase well-being not only for recipients but for givers.

Nature as Mirror
Many who describe a healed consciousness speak of renewed intimacy with nature. The sense of being separate from the Earth — a hallmark of modern industrial society — gives way to participation in living systems.

Environmental thinkers influenced by writers such as Rachel Carson helped spark awareness that ecological destruction reflects inner imbalance. When consciousness is fragmented, the planet becomes resource rather than relative.

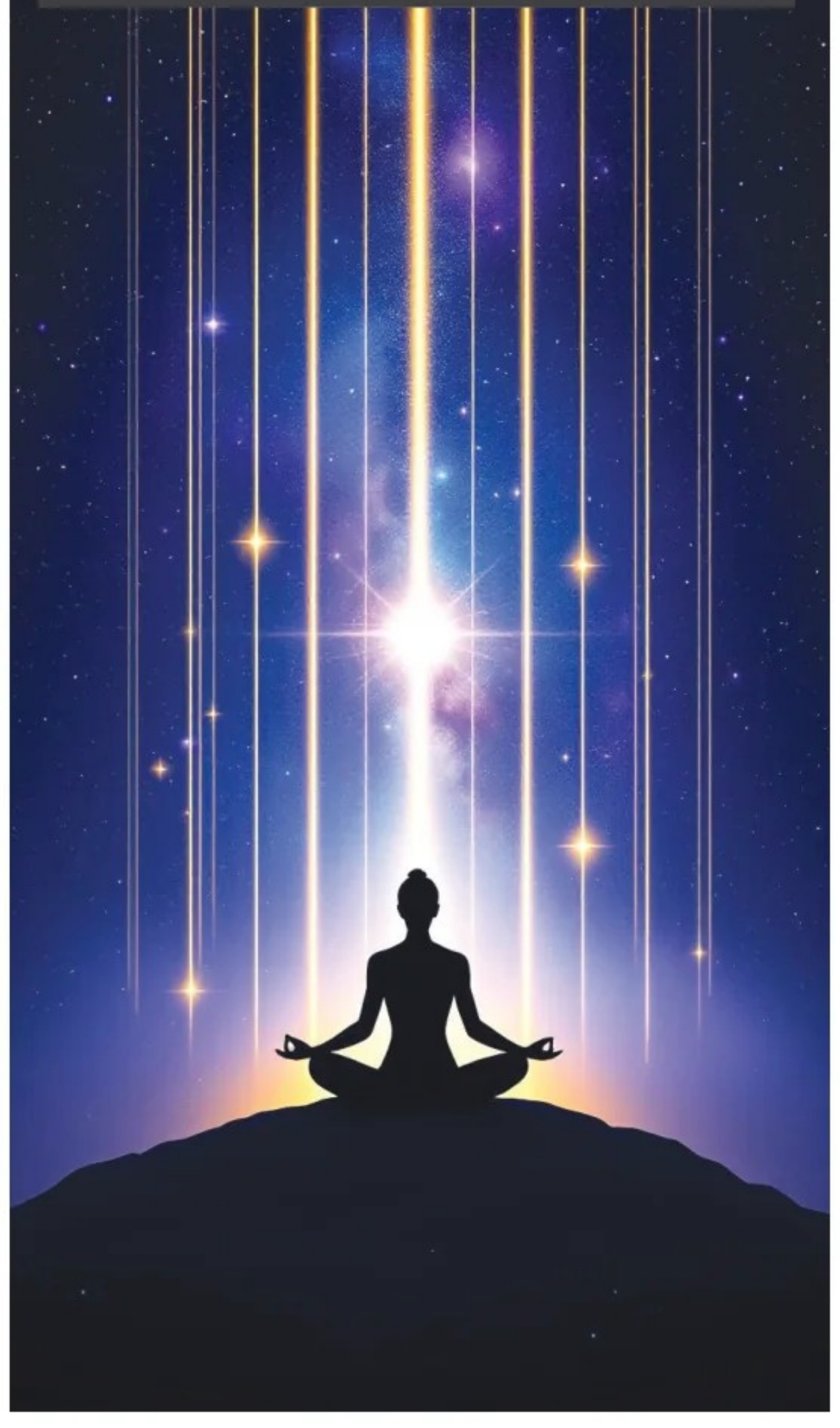
Indigenous wisdom traditions worldwide have long affirmed this relational worldview. While diverse in expression, they share an understanding that humans are embedded within sacred ecosystems. A healed consciousness rediscovers reciprocity — taking only what can be replenished.

The Dark Night as Threshold

Spiritual growth rarely unfolds in linear fashion. Many mystics speak of a necessary descent — a confrontation with emptiness or despair — before renewal emerges. The 16th-century Spanish mystic John of the Cross famously termed this passage the "dark night of the soul."

In contemporary terms, such periods may resemble depression, identity collapse or existential crisis. Old narratives fall away. What once provided certainty dissolves. Though painful, this disorientation can become fertile ground. When illusions fade, authenticity becomes possible.

A healed consciousness does not bypass suffering. It metabolizes it. It learns to sit in ambiguity without rushing toward premature answers. It accepts vulnerability as strength.

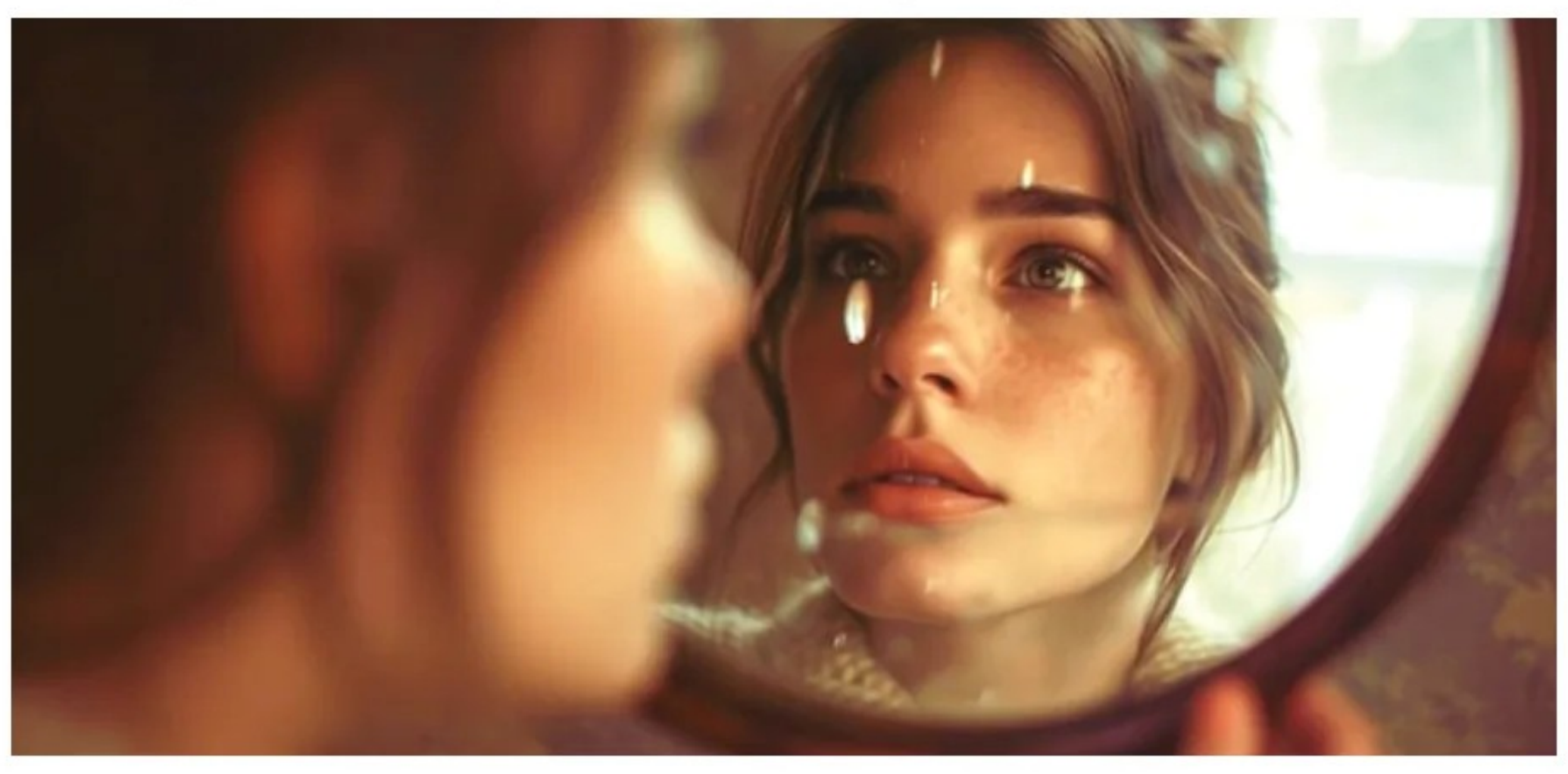


The Role of Community

Although spiritual awakening is often portrayed as solitary, sustained healing requires community. Supportive networks create accountability and belonging. They remind individuals that transformation is not a private achievement but a shared unfolding.

Throughout history, spiritual communities — from monastic orders to meditation sanghas — have provided structure for growth. Even in secular contexts, group therapy, restorative justice circles and intentional communities reflect this ancient insight: healing accelerates in relationship.

In times of polarization, cultivating dialogue across difference becomes spiritual practice. Listening deeply to opposing perspectives challenges ego rigidity. It strengthens humility.



Technology and the Inner Life

Modern technology presents both opportunity and peril for evolving consciousness. Digital platforms connect billions across continents, yet constant stimulation fragments attention. The challenge lies not in rejecting innovation but in cultivating mindful engagement.

Some contemplative teachers advocate digital sabbaths — intentional pauses from screens — to restore interior space. Without silence, insight cannot surface. Without reflection, information becomes noise.

A healed consciousness uses technology without being used by it. It prioritizes depth over distraction.

Signs of Integration
How does one recognize spiritual evolution in daily life? It may appear less dramatic than expected. There is increased patience in traffic. Greater honesty in conversation. Willingness to apologize. Capacity to forgive.

Ego-driven ambition softens into purpose-driven contribution. Success is redefined not as accumulation but as alignment. Anxiety decreases as trust grows — not blind faith, but grounded confidence in life's unfolding.

Importantly, healed consciousness does not imply the absence of pain. Rather, it signals expanded capacity to hold pain without being overwhelmed. It embodies paradox — strength and tenderness, clarity and mystery.

Collective Awakening
The evolution of individual consciousness inevitably influences collective systems. Social movements grounded in nonviolence demonstrate how inner transformation fuels structural change. When leaders cultivate self-awareness, policy reflects empathy.

Consider the global influence of figures like Nelson Mandela, whose capacity for forgiveness reshaped a nation emerging from apartheid. His example illustrates how healed consciousness can ripple outward, altering history.

Today's crises — climate instability, economic inequality, political division — may be symptoms of unhealed collective consciousness. Addressing them requires not only technological solutions but moral imagination.

Education for Wholeness
If healed consciousness represents evolution, how might societies nurture it? Education systems play a pivotal role. Beyond academic achievement, schools can cultivate emotional intelligence, ethical reasoning and contemplative awareness.

Programs integrating mindfulness into classrooms report improved focus and reduced conflict. When young people learn to identify and regulate emotions, they develop resilience.

Universities and research centers increasingly explore interdisciplinary approaches that bridge science and spirituality. The dialogue between contemplative practice and empirical research suggests a future in which inner development is valued alongside intellectual rigor.

A Quiet Revolution
The spiritual evolution of a healed consciousness is not announced by headlines. It unfolds quietly — in therapy rooms, meditation halls, forests, hospital wards and living rooms. It is visible in acts of reconciliation and in courageous truth-telling.

Though global challenges loom large, history suggests that profound shifts often begin invisibly.

When enough individuals integrate their wounds and expand their compassion, cultural norms change.

This evolution does not demand adherence to a single doctrine. It invites curiosity, humility and commitment to growth. Whether expressed through religious faith, secular mindfulness or creative expression, the trajectory is similar: from fear to love, from isolation to interconnection.

The Ongoing Journey
Perhaps the most important insight is that healing is not a destination. Consciousness continues to evolve throughout life. Each loss, each joy, each relationship refines awareness.

The poet Rainer Maria Rilke once advised living the questions rather than rushing toward answers. A healed consciousness embodies this wisdom. It remains open — to mystery, to dialogue, to change.

In a world hungry for certainty, such openness may appear fragile.

Yet it is precisely this flexibility that allows growth. Rigidity fractures under pressure; resilience bends and adapts.

The spiritual evolution of a healed consciousness is, ultimately, a return — to authenticity, to compassion, to shared humanity. It asks not that we transcend our wounds, but that we transform them into wisdom.

And in that transformation lies hope.

QUICK READ

Qualcomm, Tata Electronics to produce automotive modules in India

Mumbai

Qualcomm Technologies and Tata Electronics on Friday announced a collaboration to manufacture 'Qualcomm Automotive Modules' in India at Tata Electronics' upcoming semiconductor assembly and test facility in Jagiroad, Assam. Aligned with the 'Make in India' initiative, the collaboration aims to domestically produce automotive technologies for digital cockpits, infotainment, connectivity, and intelligent vehicle systems. Domestic production of these modules aims to address growing demand from Indian and global automakers while enhancing supply chain flexibility and geographic diversification.

India, Japan technology ties to play key role in shaping digital future

Tokyo

The growing technological ties between India and Japan in the electronics hardware sector have emerged as a new factor in cementing the strong economic and strategic relations between the world's largest democracy and Asia's tech giant. As semiconductors, generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), and digital public infrastructure (DPI) redefine the nature of global influence, this burgeoning tech alliance stands as the most vital strategic partnership in the region. Following the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit in late 2025, it is clear that this is no longer just about trade; it is about the architecture of a free and open digital future, according to an article in India Narrative.

AMARAVATI TO HOST UN AI QUANTUM HUB

ANDHRA PRADESH
India's Sunrise State
AI IMPACT SUMMIT
भारत 2026 INDIA

Centre of Excellence aims to boost secure AI and quantum innovation

AMARAVATI

The United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) will establish a Centre of Excellence for artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum technologies at Amaravati Quantum Valley in Amaravati, the capital of Andhra Pradesh. The announcement was formalised through a letter of intent signed at the AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi on Friday, in the presence of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu described the initiative as a transformative step that will position Amaravati as a Digital Embassy for secure AI systems. According to him, the Centre of Excellence will enable sovereign and cybersecure AI deployments aligned with UN-grade standards, while integrating advanced quantum technologies in the future.

Taking to social media platform X, Naidu said the collaboration with UNICC would bring international best practices and global partnerships to Andhra Pradesh. He added that the initiative would place the state firmly on the global map of trusted AI and quantum readiness. During the summit, the Chief Minister interacted with UNICC Director Sameer Chauhan and AI Hub Chief Anusha Dandapani to discuss future cooperation and implementation strategies.

On the sidelines of the summit, the Andhra Pradesh government signed seven memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with various companies and institutions to strengthen its technology ecosystem. Among them, partnerships with BharatGen, NexGen, and IBM India will help launch a state-wide AI Tech Hub aimed at accelerating research, innovation, and practical AI deployment across sectors.

Naidu emphasized that the initiative would empower citizens across diverse communities from farmers to fishermen through an inclusive, Telugu-first, citizen-focused AI framework. He said the model would serve as a national example of how technology can be harnessed to drive equitable growth while preparing for future Quantum-AI integration.

In addition, the state signed an MoU with the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) to establish its first South India campus in Amaravati. The new campus, under the Skill Development arm of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, is expected to enhance AI and quantum education and support skill development initiatives linked to India's semiconductor ecosystem. The developments mark a significant push by Andhra Pradesh to emerge as a leading hub for advanced digital technologies in India.

Policy Leaders Urge Shift to Impactful AI Use

NEW DELHI

Senior policymakers and global technology leaders on Friday called for a strategic shift from simply expanding data-centre capacity to ensuring computational resources translate into tangible public benefits across health, education, and agriculture.

The remarks were made at the 'India AI Impact Summit 2026', where a working report titled Opening Up Computational Resources for New AI Futures was launched. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the report, highlighting the urgent need to move beyond infrastructure expansion and toward mission-driven AI deployment.

Speakers at the session emphasized that increasing computing power alone would not guarantee meaningful outcomes. Instead, they stressed the importance of demand aggregation, shared infrastructure, skills development, and governance frameworks designed to align AI systems with public-interest goals. The objective, they said, is to ensure that startups, researchers, and social-sector organisations can access advanced compute resources in ways that produce real-world impact.

Dr. Saurabh Garg, Secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, noted that while AI is poised to transform the world, the central question remains whether that transformation will be equitable and inclusive. We are of the collective opinion that AI will transform the world. The defining question is whether this transformation will be equitable, inclusive, and aligned with the public interest, he said.

Martin Tisne, CEO of AI Collaborative, expressed optimism about the expansion of computing capacity within the next two years, even across countries in the Global South. However, he voiced concerns about whether data centres would be used effectively to support scalable AI services.

Experts call for public-interest focus beyond expanding data centre capacity

Vilas Dhar, President of the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, described the challenge as both technological and policy-driven.

He argued that transforming AI into scalable services for consumers and creators requires new institutional mechanisms that connect policy, capital, and deployment. Accessibility, he cautioned, cannot be left solely to market forces.

Shikoh Gitau, CEO of Qhala, underscored the importance of clearly defined development use cases. She stressed that when compute demand is anchored in concrete outcomes, governance frameworks and cross-country cooperation become easier to design and implement.

The summit concluded with a consensus that equitable AI futures will depend not just on hardware expansion, but on strategic coordination, inclusive policy design, and global collaboration.

Outlook for Indian textile industry increasingly favourable amid key FTAs: Govt officials

MUMBAI

After a year marked by resilience amid global headwinds, the outlook for the Indian textile industry is increasingly favourable, a senior government official has said, adding that key Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), now in place, are opening significant new market opportunities for Indian exporters, enhancing tariff competitiveness and strengthening India's position in global value chains. Neelam Shami Rao, Secretary (Textiles), emphasised that the convergence of these trade agreements with a distinctly textile-centric Union Budget creates a timely and strategic advantage for the sector.

India's passenger vehicle sales surge, likely to expand 5–7 pc in FY26

NEW DELHI

Passenger vehicle retail sales rose 7 per cent in January (year-on-year) in India, while wholesale volumes rose 12 per cent to 4.5 lakh units, a report said on Friday. The report from ICRA said wholesale dispatches grew 14 per cent sequentially over December 2025, even as original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) ramped up production to cater to robust domestic demand. ICRA forecasts passenger vehicle wholesale volumes to expand 5–7 per cent in FY26, supported by sustained demand momentum, GST cuts and continued new model launches.

Domestic automobile demand recorded strong growth across both two-wheeler (2W) and passenger vehicle (PV) segments in January 2026, supported by sustained demand momentum, GST rate cuts, wedding season demand and new model launches, the report said. The 14 per cent sequential growth in wholesale volumes in January was posted despite production curbs for annual maintenance. Retail sales were supported by the winter wedding season, new model launches and revised GST rates.

Overall PV wholesale growth in the 10 month of FY26 period stood at 6.7 per cent while retail volumes grew 8 per cent.

The domestic automobile sector is expected to maintain steady growth momentum through FY2026, supported by policy measures to strengthen domestic manufacturing, improving affordability following GST rationalisation, recovery in consumption and sustained rural income levels after a normal monsoon.

Meanwhile domestic two-wheeler wholesale volumes grew 25 per cent YoY, reaching 1.8 million units, while wholesale volumes recorded 6.7 per cent growth during 10 months of FY2026 (April–January). Retail sales grew 20.8 per cent YoY in January, aided by Pongal or Makar Sankranti demand, wedding season footfalls and improving affordability, the report noted. The report estimates two-wheeler domestic volumes to grow 6–9 per cent YoY in FY26, aided by improved replacement demand after GST rate cuts, gradual recovery in urban consumption and healthy rural incomes.

PLI Scheme Spurs Investment, Jobs, Exports Surge

MUMBAI

The Centre's Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme has attracted investments exceeding ₹2.16 lakh crore in the manufacturing sector and generated more than 14.39 lakh direct and indirect jobs as of December 31, 2025, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Friday.

The government said cumulative sales from manufacturing units established under the scheme have crossed ₹20.41 lakh crore, while total exports have surpassed ₹8.3 lakh crore. So far, ₹28,748 crore has been disbursed as production-linked incentives to eligible companies. A total of 836 applications across 14 sectors have been approved under the scheme, underscoring its broad-based industrial impact.

The PLI initiative has significantly strengthened India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem, positioning the country as a global hub for mobile phones and IT hardware products, including laptops, tablets, servers, and all-in-one personal computers. Mobile phone imports have declined by nearly 77 per cent since FY 2020–21, with more than 99 per cent of domestic demand now being met through local production.

Manufacturing capabilities have moved beyond simple assembly operations to include printed circuit board assemblies, batteries, camera and display modules, enclosures, and other key sub-assemblies.

This deeper value addition has enhanced integration with global value chains and reduced reliance on imports. Domestic capacity in IT hardware production has also expanded steadily, supported by progressive localisation of components.

In the pharmaceutical sector, the scheme has enabled first-time domestic manufacturing of 191 bulk drugs, leading to import substitution worth approximately ₹1,785 crore and boosting domestic value addition to 83.7 per cent. Indigenous development of biosimilars, monoclonal antibodies, and new chemical entities has strengthened pharmaceutical exports while improving supply chain resilience.

The PLI scheme has also supported local manufacturing of medical devices such as imaging systems, implants, and diagnostic equipment. By adopting globally benchmarked quality standards, the sector has reduced import dependence and enhanced competitiveness.

The Ministry stated that the scheme continues to play a pivotal role in building a robust manufacturing base, enhancing self-reliance, and strengthening India's position in global trade.

Six e-commerce platforms accused of selling restricted wireless jamming equipment

CCPA Issues Notices Over Illegal Drone Sales

MUMBAI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) on Friday issued notices to six e-commerce platforms for allegedly listing and selling restricted wireless transmitting devices, including drone jammers and anti-drone systems, in violation of existing laws. The action was announced by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs in an official statement.

The six entities named in the notices are Everse, IndiaMart, Xboom, Javiat Aerospace, AirONE Robotics, and Maveric Drones & Technologies Pvt Ltd. According to the CCPA, these platforms offered products such as Anti-Drone Systems, Drone Jammers, and GPS Jammers for commercial sale, which are regulated under multiple statutory provisions.

The Ministry stated that such equipment falls under the purview of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933. These laws mandate strict licensing and regulatory oversight by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) wing. The use and sale of signal jamming devices are tightly controlled due to their potential impact on communication networks and national security.

The CCPA has directed the concerned companies to submit detailed information regarding the source of procurement or import of the devices. They have been asked to provide copies of import licences, invoices, regulatory approvals or authorisations, and the legal basis for offering the restricted equipment for commercial sale. Additionally, the authority has sought data on the number of units sold in the last two years along with complete purchaser details.

The statement further clarified that the import of such restricted equipment is governed under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992, and relevant notifications issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

MSME EXPORT BOOST

Goyal Launches Seven New Export Boost Measures

NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday launched seven additional interventions under the Export Promotion Mission, a flagship initiative aimed at empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to compete effectively in global markets. The measures are designed to address structural bottlenecks faced by Indian exporters and drive broad-based, inclusive export growth.

Speaking at the launch, Goyal said India is now engaging with developed economies with renewed confidence, safeguarding sensitive sectors while securing gains in areas of competitive strength. He emphasized that

the benefits of global trade must reach every MSME, startup, and entrepreneur, adding that the Export Promotion Mission seeks to promote new products, services, and exporters while enabling businesses to access new international markets.

The minister highlighted that India has recorded double-digit growth in merchandise exports during the first half of February, reflecting strong market confidence and proactive participation by industry stakeholders. He noted that the Mission focuses on simplifying export processes for MSMEs, strengthening access to credit, enhancing quality standards, supporting compliance with international regulations, and expanding global logistics and warehousing infrastructure.

Initiatives such as overseas warehousing facilities, including Bharat Mart in Dubai, are aimed at providing Indian exporters strategic access to markets across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, Africa, Central Asia, and Europe. These hubs are expected to reduce logistics costs and improve supply chain efficiency for exporters.

The Export Promotion Mission adopts a comprehensive ecosystem approach, combining financial enablers under the 'Niryat Protsahan' framework with trade ecosystem support under 'Niryat Disha'. The integrated framework is digitally monitored to ensure effective implementation and transparency.

The initiative is being implemented by the Department of Commerce in coordination with the Ministry of MSME, Ministry of Finance, EXIM Bank, Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE), National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC), regulated lending institutions, Indian Missions abroad, Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), and other industry stakeholders.

The newly introduced interventions aim to tackle high capital costs, limited access to diversified trade finance instruments, compliance burdens in overseas markets, logistics disadvantages, and barriers to market entry.

T20 World Cup: NZ seek spin answers against Pak in Super 8s

Middle-order resilience key as Colombo pitch favours spin attack

COLOMBO

New Zealand's middle-order will be under intense scrutiny when they take on Pakistan in the opening Super Eight Group 2 clash of the ICC T20 World Cup here on Saturday, with Colombo's sluggish surface expected to amplify the impact of Pakistan's seasoned spin attack.

While openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen have provided brisk starts — sharing three fifties between them — the rest of the batting unit has struggled for rhythm. Glenn Phillips and Rachin Ravindra have a half-century each, but consistency has eluded them, with Ravindra's bulk of runs coming in a single outing.

The challenge is steeper given this is New Zealand's first game in Colombo. Pakistan, in contrast, have been based here throughout and already featured twice at the R Premadasa Stadium, gaining familiarity with conditions that demand patience over power.

Pakistan's spin arsenal — Abrar Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz and Shadab Khan among others — gives them a distinct edge on a pitch where variations and control are crucial. However, Pakistan's batting has its own concerns.

Babar Azam has endured a lean run, scoring 66 runs in four matches at a modest strike-rate. If struggles persist, the management may consider introducing Fakhar Zaman. The inclusion of Shaheen Shah Afridi is also under discussion after he was left out of the previous fixture.

New Zealand's pace quartet — Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Jacob Duffy and James Neesham — must adapt quickly with cutters and slower deliveries to avoid overburdening spinners Mitchell Santner and Ish Sodhi.

With both sides carrying strengths and vulnerabilities, execution under pressure could determine who gains early momentum in the Super 8s.

AFGHANISTAN'S 'COACH BY CHANCE' TROTT BIDS EMOTIONAL FAREWELL

CHENNAI

An emotional Jonathan Trott signed off as Afghanistan head coach after their T20 World Cup campaign ended, describing his four-year stint as an opportunity that came "by chance" but turned into a deeply fulfilling journey.

The 44-year-old, who took over when fellow Englishman Graham Thorpe was unable to accept the role, leaves having overseen one of the most progressive phases in Afghanistan's cricket history. Afghanistan bowed out of the tournament despite finishing with an emphatic 82-run win over Canada in their final group match.

Trott struggled to hold back tears as he reflected on his tenure, during which Afghanistan emerged as a formidable white-ball outfit. Under his guidance, the team narrowly missed a semi-final berth at the 2023 ODI World Cup and reached the knockout stage of the 2024 T20 World Cup, underlining their rapid rise on the global stage.

Englishman reflects on four transformative years with rising Afghan side

"Maybe the time's right, maybe it's not. I don't know, but I'm very thankful for the opportunity," Trott said after the match. "I got the job by chance. I took it with both hands and gave it my all."

Beyond results, Trott said the greatest satisfaction came from witnessing the players' personal growth. He spoke warmly about seeing young cricketers evolve into mature individuals capable of transforming their families' futures through the sport.

He admitted the tournament's mixed fortunes weighed heavily on him, especially the heartbreaking Super Over defeat to South Africa that dented their Super Eights hopes. "We've been a little bit unlucky at times," he said, recalling how fine margins shaped their exit.

Despite the disappointment, Trott leaves content — proud of the memories created and the foundations laid for Afghanistan's promising future.

MARKRAM'S SPIN-OPENING SELECTION DILEMMA

AHMEDABAD

India's explosive opener Abhishek Sharma faces a rare lean patch ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup Super Eight clash against South Africa on February 22. Despite a strike rate above 192, he has registered three successive ducks, hampered by a stomach bug and sluggish surfaces. South Africa skipper Aiden Markram may counter with early spin options. Team management, including batting coach Sitanshu Kotak, remains confident. As history shows, even greats rebound quickly — and one decisive knock could instantly revive Abhishek's campaign.

PRATIKA
64
SAYALI
47

3rd Women's T20I: India eye batting resurgence for historic series win

ADELAIDE

India's batters will look to rediscover their collective firepower against a seasoned Australian attack in the third and final Women's T20I here on Saturday, aiming to script a historic maiden bilateral series win in Australia.

Despite occasional victories Down Under, India have never clinched a bilateral series across formats in Australia. With the series poised delicately, the onus is firmly on the top and middle order to deliver under pressure.

Openers Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma have shown promise but failed to convert starts, a lapse that hurt India in their 164-run chase in the previous match. Australia's experienced trio of Kim Garth, Annabel Sutherland and Sophie Molineux triggered a dramatic collapse, removing five Indian batters for just seven runs.

The Adelaide surface, however, promises truer bounce compared to Canberra, encouraging stroke play. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, along with Jemimah Rodrigues and Richa Ghosh, will relish the ball coming on to the bat and the value offered by the quick outfield.

India's pacers — Renuka Singh and Arundhati Reddy among others — must maintain discipline, as Australia's batting line-up is quick to capitalise on loose deliveries. The biggest threat remains the prolific Georgia Voll, who has seamlessly stepped into the opening role. Spinners Deepti Sharma and Sree Charani will play a crucial role in controlling the middle overs and containing power-hitters like Sutherland and Ashleigh Gardner.

For India, this is more than just a decider — it is an opportunity to break new ground in Australian conditions and claim a landmark series triumph.

Ex-England captain says players still talk in private despite public snub

'It's only for show': Cook questions India-Pakistan handshake row

LONDON

Former England skipper Alastair Cook has stirred debate by suggesting that the much-discussed "no handshake" policy between India and Pakistan players is largely symbolic, claiming the cricketers continue to interact cordially away from the cameras.

Cook questioned the authenticity of the on-field froideur between the arch-rivals.

"It's only for show, isn't it? On the field they are not shaking hands, but behind closed doors they are chatting away and are all fine," Cook said, implying that the public stance may not reflect private realities.

The handshake controversy began during the 2025 Asia Cup when India captain Suryakumar Yadav declined the customary pre-match handshake at the toss. The gesture — or lack of it — has since continued across multiple tournaments, including the women's and Under-19 events, with both sides maintaining the status quo.

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INDIA
PAKISTAN

Vaughan termed the situation "sad," while Tufnell described the recent contests as increasingly one-sided in India's favour. Their remarks came days after India defeated Pakistan by 61 runs in their latest T20 World Cup clash, though both teams progressed to the Super 8 stage.

The rivalry, one of cricket's most intense, often transcends sport, shaped by political and diplomatic tensions between the two nations. However, Cook's assertion adds a new layer to the debate — suggesting that while the optics project hostility, personal relationships between players may remain intact.

With the possibility of another India-Pakistan showdown later in the tournament, attention will once again turn not only to the cricket, but also to what unfolds — or does not — at the toss.

Shivam Dube's reinvention story: Technique tweaks fuel fiery comeback

AHMEDABAD

From being under scrutiny to becoming indispensable, Shivam Dube has scripted a stirring comeback built on technical refinement, renewed self-belief and fearless finishing in pressure moments.

Just 20 months ago, Dube was among the most criticised members of India's T20 World Cup squad. Despite a productive IPL season with Chennai Super Kings, doubts lingered over his ability to handle high pace and short-pitched bowling. On challenging surfaces, he managed only 106 runs in seven matches, and many questioned his place in the XI. Yet captain Rohit Sharma and coach Rahul Dravid kept faith. Dube repaid them memorably in the final against South Africa, striking a brisk 27 off 16 balls to shift momentum after a shaky start. Determined to evolve, he turned to veteran coach Praveen Amre. A switch from a side-on stance to a more open setup improved his access to short deliveries. Enhanced fitness, added muscle and sharper agility boosted his bat speed and confidence.

The transformation has been striking. Dube dominated New Zealand's pace attack before the tournament and smashed 65 off 23 balls in a statement innings. His 31-ball 66 against the Netherlands further highlighted his growth. Now a complete T20 force, Dube's resurgence reflects resilience, adaptation and unwavering belief.

Vaishnavi storms into quarters; Sahaja, Shrivalli bow out

BENGALURU

India's wildcard entrant Vaishnavi Adkar kept the tricolour flying high with a stirring comeback victory, while Sahaja Yamalapalli and Shrivalli Rashmikaa Bhamidipaty bowed out of the KPB Trust ITF Women's Open W100 at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium.

Ranked 690, the 21-year-old Vaishnavi displayed remarkable composure to overcome Japan's Mai Hontama (World No. 220) in a gripping pre-quarterfinal. After dropping the opening set 2-6, she broke early in the second to level the match 6-4. The decider was a tense battle of long rallies and momentum swings. Trailing 2-5 in the tie-break, Vaishnavi mounted a spirited comeback, striking fearless forehands and capitalising on errors to clinch a 7-6 (8) win in two hours and 49 minutes. It marks her first W100 quarterfinal appearance.

Earlier, India No. 1 Sahaja (WR 416) was overwhelmed 6-0, 6-0 by Australia's top seed Talia Gibson (WR 111). Shrivalli (WR 543) pushed Belgium's Hanne Vandewinkel (WR 124) to three sets but fell 2-6, 7-6 (7), 1-6.

Of the three Indians in action, only Vaishnavi advances, keeping home hopes alive.

Crisis rocks Pakistan hockey as PHF chief Bugti resigns

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan hockey was plunged into turmoil after Tariq Bugti resigned as president of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), a day after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ordered an inquiry into the team's chaotic tour of Australia in the FIH Pro League.

Bugti confirmed he had sent his resignation to the prime minister, who serves as the PHF's patron-in-chief, and urged an impartial probe into the events that unfolded in Sydney. The controversy erupted after a viral video showed Pakistani players standing on a street with their luggage, allegedly due to accommodation issues.

National captain Shakeel Ammad Butt initially downplayed the incident but later criticised the federation upon returning home, claiming the players were forced to wander without proper lodging and even "wash dishes before playing a match." In response, Bugti imposed a two-year ban on Butt, accusing him of bringing disrepute to Pakistan hockey.

REHAN
16
FAREED
5
RASHID
6
3
4

The episode triggered a blame game between the PHF and the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), with Bugti asserting that the PSB handled logistical arrangements for the tour.

The turmoil comes amid dismal results on the field. Pakistan have lost all eight of their Pro League matches, including defeats to Australia and Germany, compounding concerns about the sport's decline.

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